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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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3 BBMP workers fired for negligence during caste census

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

Three officers from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) have been suspended for dereliction of duty during the ongoing caste census for the Scheduled Caste (SC) population in the city. The action follows public complaints about BBMP enumerators affixing survey stickers on houses without interacting with residents. The suspended officers — Ramesh (Revenue Inspector), Peddaraju (Tax Collector) from the East Zone, and Senthil Kumar (Tax Collector) from the Rajarajeshwari Nagar Zone — were found to have failed in supervising enumerators properly. *—PTI*

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Karnataka to start English classes in 4,134 govt schools

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

The Karnataka government has decided to commence English medium classes alongside Kannada and other mediums in 4,134 state-run primary schools. The order will come into effect from the academic year 2025-26. The bilingual classes will be implemented by utilising locally available resources. The initiative is aimed at offering students with better access to quality education. In an order issued on 2 July, the government gave its approval. "Subject to the conditions to commence English medium (Bilingual medium) classes alongside the existing Kannada and other mediums in Government Primary Schools in the state," the order said. *—PTI*

AI terminates flight to US as refuelling stop reveals snag

DELHI, 3 JULY

An Air India flight from Delhi to Washington was cancelled in Vienna after a scheduled fuel stop, the airline confirmed on Thursday. Flight AI 103 departed Delhi at 12.45am on Wednesday and was meant to arrive in Washington by 8.45pm. During the refuelling halt in Vienna, routine checks revealed an extended maintenance issue, requiring rectification before further travel. As a result, the Vienna to Washington leg was cancelled, and all passengers were either rebooked to Delhi or offered full refunds. The return flight, AI 104 from Washington to Delhi via Vienna, was also cancelled. This comes amid recent safety concerns. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Liverpool's Diogo Jota killed in Spain car crash

MADRID, 3 JULY

Liverpool player Diogo Jota and his brother were killed in a car accident in Spain when the Lamborghini they were in veered off a road and burst into flames. Jota, 28 and his brother, André Silva, 25, were found dead near the northwestern city of Zamora. Police suspect a blown tire of their vehicle to have caused the accident. Jota us survived by his wife, Rute Cardoso and three children. Jota joined Liverpool in 2020 and won three major trophies. *—PTI*

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AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal **PHOTO: PTI**

AAP ditches INDIA to go solo in Gujarat

AHMEDABAD, 3 JULY

Aam Aadmi Party's national convener Arvind Kejriwal said on Thursday that his party no longer has an alliance with the Congress, accusing it of helping the ruling BJP in Gujarat.

The Congress-led INDIA (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance) grouping of opposition parties was meant only for the Lok Sabha elections last year, he said.

The former Delhi chief minister said his party would fight the 2027 Gujarat assembly elections and emerge victorious as people there now have an option other than the BJP and Congress.

"…..The INDIA bloc was only for the Lok Sabha polls. Now there is no alliance……," said Kejriwal.

Kejriwal claimed that the BJP has ruined Gujarat in its 30-year rule and the Congress failed as an opposition.

AAP cadres will campaign vigorously in the state for two and a half years to convince people ahead of the 2027 assembly polls.

It also launched the 'Gujarat Jodo Abhiyan' on Thursday, under which people can join the party by giving a missed call on a number.

Kejriwal appealed to the youths to join his party if they wanted to free Gujarat of corruption.

In the 182-member Gujarat assembly, the BJP has 162 MLAs, Congress 12, AAP five, Samajwadi Party one and two independents.

The move comes ahead of the Bihar elections, where the Congress is part of the 'Mahagathbandhan' (Grand Alliance) along with the RJD and various other left parties. When campaigning in Bihar, leaders had asserted that the INDIA bloc would contest together, in a move that both signified unity at the state and national level at the time. *—PTI*

INDIA bloc Chairman Mallikarjun Kharge **PHOTO: PTI**

India, US to ink 10-year defence framework

India to receive 3 Apache helicopters from the US by 15 July

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

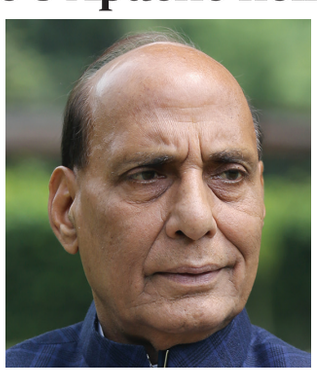
India and the United States are set to formalise a new 10-year defence framework to further strengthen strategic and military ties. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth agreed to sign the agreement during their upcoming meeting later this year, according to a Pentagon statement released Wednesday.

The two leaders, in a phone conversation held on Tuesday, discussed key defence issues including pending US defence sales and the importance of enhanced industrial cooperation. "Secretary Hegseth emphasised the priority the United States places on India as its key defence partner in South Asia," the Pentagon noted.

They also reviewed the "considerable progress" made since the February 2025 joint statement by President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, covering goals such as interoperability, logistics sharing, and expanded military exercises.

During the call, Singh urged Hegseth to expedite the delayed delivery of GE F404 engines crucial for powering India's Tejas Light Combat Aircraft. He also pushed for early finalisation of the HAL–GE Aerospace deal to jointly produce F414 jet engines in India. Delays in F404 engine delivery have already impacted HAL's ability to supply the Tejas Mark 1A to the Indian Air Force.

Meanwhile, India is set to receive its first batch of three AH-64E Apache attack helicopters from the US by 15 July, with a second batch expected in November. The $600 million deal, signed in 2020, had faced multiple delays due to supply chain issues.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a conversation with his US counterpart Pete Hegseth on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Defence Ministry approves ₹1.05L cr projects

In a major boost to India's military modernisation, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) on Thursday approved capital acquisition proposals worth Rs 1.05 lakh crore. The projects include armoured recovery vehicles, electronic warfare systems, surface-to-air missiles, and inventory management systems for the tri-services.

Additional approvals were granted for mine countermeasure vessels, super rapid gun mounts, and submersible autonomous vessels aimed at enhancing naval operational capabilities. *—PTI*

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'WILL CROSS THAT BRIDGE'

India concerned over US' 500% tariff

WASHINGTON, 3 JULY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar confirmed that India has conveyed its concerns to US Senator Lindsey Graham over his proposed legislation to impose a 500 per cent tariff on countries purchasing oil from Russia.

"I think our concerns and our interests in energy security have been made conversant to him," Jaishankar said in response to a media query during his visit to Washington on Wednesday. He noted that Indian officials and the embassy have remained in touch with Senator Graham, adding, "We'll then have to cross that bridge when we come to it, if we come to it."

The proposed bill aims to pressurise Moscow into peace negotiations with Ukraine by penalising nations continuing to import Russian oil. Jaishankar stated that developments in the US Congress are closely monitored by India, especially when they have potential implications for Indian interests.

Meanwhile, trade officials from both nations are engaged in intense negotiations in Washington on a proposed interim trade deal. India is pushing for increased market access for its labour-intensive goods, while the US is seeking duty concessions for its agricultural exports. A joint Quad statement, issued by Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australia's Penny Wong, and Japan's Takeshi Iwaya, condemned terrorism and called for justice following the Pahalgam attack that killed 26 people. *—PTI*

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S Jaishankar meets FBI Chief Kash Patel in US **PHOTO: PTI**

THE STAR AND CM

Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra meets Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru ahead of the Neeraj Chopra Classic, a top-tier international javelin event set for 5 July at Sree Kanteerava Stadium **PHOTO: SALAR**

India snubs China over Dalai Lama's successor

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

In snub to China, Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday said the decision on the Incarnation of the Dalai Lama would be taken by the established institution and the Dalai Lama himself and no one else. On Wednesday, Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama said that the institution of the Dalai Lama will continue and only the Gaden Phodrang Trust will have the authority to recognise his future reincarnation. The minister's remarks came after China rejected the succession plan, insisting that any future heir must receive its approval. *—PTI*

India & Ghana ink defence, vaccines pact during PM's visit

ACCRA, 3 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday and Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama said that the nations would expand the bilateral ties in areas, including defence, food security and pharmaceuticals, especially vaccines. Modi also suggested that India would share its knowledge of UPI with Ghana.

The two countries inked four pacts that will provide for cooperation in several areas including culture and traditional medicine.

Modi also said that India intends to double its mutual trade with Ghana in the next five years.

Modi, who was conferred with 'The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana', the country's national honour, said it was a deeply moving experience and he will always cherish it. "I dedicate it to the enduring friendship and shared values that bind India and Ghana," he said. "We put emphasis on Africa's rightful place at the global high table. We are proud that the African Union became a permanent member of the G20 during our Presidency," he added. Modi, on his five nation tour later, spoke in Ghana's Parliament before embarking for Trinidad and Tobago. *—PTI*

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PM Narendra Modi being conferred with 'The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana, the country's national honour, by the Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama, in Accra on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

3 Indian workers abducted from factory in Mali

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

India has expressed deep concern over the abduction of three Indian nationals in Mali amid a series of terrorist attacks in various parts of the West African country.

A day after the Indians were abducted, New Delhi called upon the Mali government to take all necessary measures to secure their "safe and expeditious" release.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) expressed its "deep concern" regarding the abduction of Indians, employed at the Diamond Cement Factory in Kayes.

A group of armed assailants carried out a coordinated attack at the factory premises and forcibly took three Indian nationals as hostages. No one claimed responsibility for the kidnappings. Al-Qaeda affiliate Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin has claimed responsibility for coordinated attacks across Mali. The Indian embassy in Bamako is in "close and constant" communication with the families of the victims, relevant authorities, local law enforcement agencies and the factory's management. The MEA advised all Indians residing in Mali to exercise caution, remain vigilant and stay in close contact with the embassy for regular updates. *—PTI*

SAYS 'I WILL COME AGAIN'

Man poses as delivery agent, enters Pune women's home & rapes her

PUNE, 3 JULY

An man allegedly raped a 22-year-old IT professional after gaining access to her apartment in Pune by posing as a courier delivery executive, police said on Thursday.

The accused also clicked a selfie on the victim's phone in which her back and his partial face are seen.

He left a message on her phone, warning her not to inform about the crime to anyone as he had taken her pictures and would share them on social media, and also mentioned: "I will come again", police said.

The incident took place at around 7.30 pm on Wednesday at a housing society in Kondhwa.

The survivor, who has studied Information Technology and works in a private firm, was alone in her apartment as her brother had gone out of town. The man came to her house possessing a bank document and gained entry. He asked for a pen to sign (a document) and as she turned her back to him, he came inside the house and latched the door. "The woman does not remember anything as she gained consciousness around 8.30 pm," Shinde said. Maybe the the accused used some substance to make her unconscious, police said. *—PTI*

Delhi halts fuel ban on old cars

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The Delhi government has written to the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), saying the fuel ban on overage vehicles is not feasible due to technological challenges and complex systems.

Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Delhi Environment minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Thursday said that there was discontent among people due to this move and the government stood with them.

The government has suggested that the ban should be implemented across the National Capital Region (NCR), he added. *—PTI*

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Siddaramaiah in CM seat a blow to Cong, says Ashoka

BENGGALURU, 3 JULY

BJP leader R Ashoka on Thursday criticised Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for repeatedly asserting he would serve a full five-year term, calling it a direct affront to the Congress high command and its internal commitments. Ashoka, Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly, said Siddaramaiah's insistence on completing a full term, despite rumours of a power-sharing pact with Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, was not confidence but "defiance". "What happened to the high command's will? Has it been reduced to a rubber stamp? Or has Siddaramaiah declared independence from party discipline?" he asked in a post on X. *—Salar News*

Coracle boating, bathing banned at Hogenakkal Falls

MYSURU, 3 JULY

The Forest Department has suspended coracle boating and bathing in the Cauvery River at Hogenakkal Falls, Hanur taluk, Chamarajanagar district, for the past three days until further notice due to tourist safety concerns. Following heavy water discharge from the KRS and Kabini dams downstream, boating has become risky, with previous drowning incidents prompting the ban. Visitors can still enjoy the scenic beauty, trekking, the fish market, local cuisine, and other activities, but coracle rides remain prohibited, the Forest Department stated. *—Salar News*

Worker kills self in Kolar hospital over forced marriage

KOLAR, 3 JULY

Harish Babu, 30, a data entry operator at the E hospital wing of SNR District Hospital in Kolar, was found hanging in an OPD section early Wednesday. Harish, from Nayakarahalli in Kolar taluk, reportedly took the extreme step due to unhappiness over his recent marriage, registered on 2nd July. Sources reveal Harish, employed for over 10 years, was in love with a colleague who urged him to marry. However, Harish avoided meeting her parents, causing tension. The woman, frustrated by his evasive behaviour, informed both families about their relationship. After a meeting of the families on 1 July, it was decided to register the marriage and hold rituals, which Harish was reluctant to. The marriage was registered at the Sub Registrar's office, Kolar. Harish travelled to his village with his mother before returning to the hospital, where he consumed liquor bought nearby and ended his life. *—Salar News*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

Woman dies of heart attack after mishap kills son

BIDAR, 3 JULY

An accident near Ghodampalli village, Bidar taluk, claimed two lives when a Tata Mini goods vehicle lost control due to speeding and plunged into a roadside well at 9.30pm on Wednesday. Driver Lakshmikant Kantu Maharaj, 45, and passenger Ravi, 18, died on the spot. Five others were seriously injured and are hospitalised. The tragedy deepened when Lakshmikant's 86-year-old mother, Sharadabai Maharaj, suffered a fatal heart attack upon hearing the news, raising the death toll to three. Locals blame uncovered wells and excessive speed breakers for the mishap. Villagers have repeatedly urged authorities to cover the wells and remove unnecessary speed breakers, but no action has been taken. Bidar South MLA Shailendra Beldale assured a solution these concerns and promised compensation to the victims' families. Police have registered a case following the incident. *—Salar News*

3 BBMP workers fired for laxity during caste census

Survey stickers put outside homes without interaction

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

- Three officers from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike have been suspended for dereliction of duty during the ongoing caste census for the Scheduled Caste population in the city. The action follows public complaints about BBMP enumerators affixing survey stickers on houses without interacting with residents

Three officers from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) have been suspended for dereliction of duty during the ongoing caste census for the Scheduled Caste (SC) population in the city. The action follows public complaints about BBMP enumerators affixing survey stickers on houses without interacting with residents.

The suspended officers — Ramesh (Revenue Inspector), Peddaraju (Tax Collector) from the East Zone, and Senthil Kumar (Tax Collector) from the Rajarajeshwari Nagar Zone — were found to have failed in supervising enumerators properly. According to the suspension order issued by East Zone Zonal Commissioner Snehal R on 2 July, the officers were instructed to ensure that stickers were placed only after enumerators contacted household members and completed the survey. They were also responsible for uploading the data via a mobile app.

However, it was observed that stickers were being placed arbitrarily on houses in HRBR Layout without any resident interaction, violating BBMP protocol. The officers failed to monitor or address this lapse, which was deemed a serious act of negligence.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah addressed public concerns, clarifying that the survey aims to ensure no SC resident is excluded.

"If people are worried about improper enumeration, they can apply online, participate in door-to-door surveys, or attend camps. You only need to declare your caste through any of these methods," he said.

The BBMP has reiterated that enumerators must interact with residents before placing stickers and is taking steps to ensure data accuracy going forward. Officials confirmed that all three suspended officers are from the revenue division and have been relieved of duties with immediate effect.

The civic body has urged the public to cooperate with enumerators and report any irregularities during the census process to local BBMP offices. *—PTI*

MONSOON ALERT

K'taka to witness weeklong heavy rain & winds: IMD

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast widespread rainfall across Karnataka over the next seven days, with "heavy to very heavy rain" expected in several districts and "extremely heavy rainfall" likely at isolated locations.

The weather pattern is being influenced by the monsoon trough passing through central and eastern India, along with an offshore trough extending along the Maharashtra–Karnataka coast, the IMD said in a statement on Thursday morning.

According to daily weather report, "heavy to very heavy rain" accompanied by winds of 30–40kmph is likely in the coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada and Udupi for the next two days, gradually decreasing in intensity thereafter, though light to moderate rain is likely to continue, the statement added.

In north interior Karnataka, Belagavi district is likely to receive "heavy to very heavy rain" with wind speeds of 40–50kmph on 3 and 4 July.

Dharwad is also expected to receive "heavy rainfall". Light to moderate rain with gusty winds is likely across Bidar, Bagalkot, Gadag, Haveri, Kalaburagi, Koppal, Raichur, Vijayapura, and Yadgir throughout the week.

In south interior Karnataka, "heavy to very heavy rainfall" is expected in Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Shivamogga, and Kodagu on 3 and 4 July, with "extremely heavy rain" at isolated places on 3 July.

Other districts are likely to experience "light to moderate rain". *—PTI*

CM wrong on vaccines: Mazumdar

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

> **In light of recent concerns, we affirm: Two large-scale studies by ICMR and AIIMS, as cited by the Ministry of Health (@MoHFW_INDIA) have found no link between COVID-19 vaccines and sudden deaths. The vaccines are safe and scientifically validated**
>
> —Serum Institute, Covishield maker

Biocon founder and Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw on Thursday opposed Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's remarks linking Covid-19 vaccines with a spate of heart attack deaths in the state's Hassan district, saying such claims are "'factually incorrect" and "misleading".

Siddaramaiah has suggested that the recent heart attack deaths in Hassan district may be linked to 'hastily' approved Covid-19 vaccines.

In a social media post, Shaw said "Covid-19 vaccines developed in India were approved under the Emergency Use Authorisation framework, following rigorous protocols aligned with global standards for safety and efficacy. To suggest that these vaccines were 'hastily' approved is factually incorrect and contributes to public misinformation."

"These vaccines have saved millions of lives and, like all vaccines, may cause side effects in a very small number of individuals. It is important to acknowledge the science and data-driven processes behind their development, rather than engage in retrospective blame," Shaw said.

Meanwhile, study conducted by the AIIMS-Delhi in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has claimed that there was no link between COVID-19 vaccination and sudden cardiac arrests among young individuals.

The Chief Minister said on Tuesday that more than 20 people died of heart attack in Hassan district in the past month alone, and that the state government was taking the matter seriously. *—PTI*

PUBLIC HUMILIATION

Top cop who sought VRS over CM's slap gesture attends duty

DHARWAD, 3 JULY

Additional Superintendent of Police Narayan Baramani, who had sought voluntary retirement from service (VRS), after facing the Chief Minister's anger during a Congress rally in April, on Thursday said he was attending to his duty.

"As I'm in a disciplined department, I have shared my feelings with my higher officials. The chief minister, home minister and higher officials have spoken to me in this regard. I'm attending duty," Baramani said.

The officer, however, did not comment on the episode and the status of his VRS, citing that he is in a disciplined department.

Siddaramaiah on 28 April lost his cool and made a gesture by raising his hand at Baramani on the stage, as an alleged group of women BJP workers tried to disrupt his speech during a massive rally in Belagavi.

As the women showed a black flag and raised slogans, a visibly upset Siddaramaiah summoned the Additional SP rank officer onto the stage. He addressed him in singular and said, "Come here, who is the SP? What are you doing?"

The CM was then seen making a gesture by raising his hand at the officer out of frustration, but withdrew it immediately, and subsequently instructed him to remove the people who were creating a disturbance.

"Having been publicly insulted and humiliated by the behaviour of the chief minister on a public platform for a mistake I did not commit, I have no other option but to seek voluntary retirement," Baramani's purported letter to the Home Department said. *—PTI*

Yaduveer bats for dress code at Chamundi Hills

CHAMUNDI HILLS, 3 JULY

Devotees visiting temples must wear decent attire to maintain religious and cultural sanctity, said Yaduveer Krishnadutta Chamaraja Wadiyar, as he batted for a dress code for the Sur Kshetra Chamundeshwari Temple atop Chamundi Hills in Mysuru.

Speaking after reviewing Ashada Friday arrangements, the MP said devotees had raised concerns about inappropriate clothing worn by some visitors. He noted that temples in Kerala and Tirupati already enforce dress codes, explicitly barring western attire such as shorts, Bermuda shorts, miniskirts, night suits, torn jeans, and frocks. "As people follow dress codes in offices and courts, similar respect should be shown at religious places," he said. *—Salar News*

300 acres of encroached forest cleared in Tumakuru sanctuary

TUMAKURU, 3 JULY

Earthmovers at work on reclaimed land **PHOTO: SALAR**

Forest, Zoology, and Environment Minister Eshwar B Khandre announced the clearance of 300 acres of encroached land in the Bukkapatna Chinkara Wildlife Sanctuary worth Rs 100 crore, located within the Muttugadahalli Reserved Forest under Tiptur subdivision, Tumakuru district.

The cleared area includes 209 acres of forest land and land previously transferred from the Forest Department to the Horticulture Department.

The Minister stated that in 1926, under the Mysore Forest Acts, the Mysore Maharajas had allocated land in Survey No. 46 of Muttugadahalli Ambarapura to the Forest Department. However, portions of this land were illegally sanctioned to private individuals, while others encroached upon it. Following a legal case, the Karnataka High Court ruled that the land must be retained as forest.

Chief Conservator of Forests Yedukondalu V said around 20 years ago approximately 65 to 70 people encroached on forest land. *—Salar News*

PROTEST AGAINST RAVIKUMAR

The Congress on Thursday lodged complaints against BJP MLC N Ravikumar for allegedly making derogatory remarks about Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh during a protest. A Congress delegation, including Saleem Ahmed, Ramesh Babu and BK Hariprasad, submitted the complaint to Legislative Council Chairperson Basavaraj Horatti and the Vidhana Soudha police. The IAS Officers Association demanded a public apology from Ravikumar **PHOTO: SALAR NEWS**

Farmer rights activist and Bhartiya Kisan Union spokesperson Rakesh Tikait, along with a group of farmers, protest at Freedom Park on Thursday against land acquisition in Channarayapatna, Bengaluru Rural district **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

SKM joins farmers' stir against land acquisition

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

National farmers' leaders from the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) and allied groups expressed solidarity with Devanahalli farmers resisting the acquisition of 1,777 acres near Bengaluru.

Ahead of a crucial meeting with Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on 4 July, they demanded a fair dialogue and complete withdrawal of the proceedings. Farmers' leaders from northern India, including Rakesh Tikait, joined protests at Freedom Park on Thursday.

At a joint press conference, SKM leaders Darshan Pal, Tikait, Yudhveer Singh, Viju Krishnan, and Dr Sunilam, alongside Samyukta Horata Karnataka representatives and activist SR Hiremath, praised the farmers' steadfast struggle spanning over three and a half years.

Darshan Pal described the Devanahalli movement as "unique", noting the farmers' refusal to relinquish their land despite proximity to Bengaluru. Tikait highlighted nationwide attention and the farmers' firm resolve against forced acquisition. The leaders invoked the 2013 Land Acquisition Act, which requires 80 per cent farmer consent. *—Salar News*

Gang assaults café staff over an 'extra cup'

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

- An employee of a popular coffee joint in Bengaluru was assaulted on Wednesday evening by group over an extra cup of coffee.

An employee of a popular coffee joint in Bengaluru was assaulted on Wednesday evening by a group over an extra cup of coffee.

The incident, which took place at the Namma Filter Coffee in Seshadripuram at 6.50 pm, was captured on the CCTV camera in the cafe and the video has been doing the rounds on social media.

A group of male customers at the joint reportedly asked for an extra cup of coffee (without charge) after purchasing one.

The male staff refused citing the cafe's policy and suggested that they make an additional purchase instead.

This suggestion infuriated the group who started shouting, leading to an altercation.

In the video, the customers can then be seen hitting and thrashing the male employee even as he tried to defend himself.

A couple of other employees tried intervening and protecting him from being beaten up but with no success.

A case has been registered at the Sheshadripuram police station and an investigation is underway. *—Agencies*

A member of the group assaults a male employee **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Patil seeks ₹550cr for new reservoir in Vijayapura

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

Infrastructure Development Minister MB Patil met Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday to discuss preparations for the upcoming Cabinet meeting in Vijayapura and to seek approval for a key irrigation project.

Patil submitted a memorandum requesting Rs 550 crore for constructing a 0.775 TMC reservoir near Babanagar under the Tubachi-Babaleshwar Lift Irrigation Scheme. The project aims to provide year-round water for agriculture, drinking and livestock in water-scarce regions such as Babaleshwar, Tikota, Jamakhandi and Athani.

Currently, around 1.3 lakh acres – 60 per cent under horticulture – are supported by the scheme, but face shortages during summer. He proposed using 434 acres of available government land for the reservoir, expressing hope for a positive response from the Water Resources Department, which is overseen by Shivakumar.

The meeting also touched on land acquisition for the proposed Aerospace and Defence Park near Devanahalli, where Patil emphasised fair compensation for farmers. *—ANI*

PHOTO: KERALA UNIVERSITY

Kerala varsity suspends registrar over Guv event

T'PURAM, 3 JULY

Kerala University Vice Chancellor Dr Mohanan Kunnummal has suspended Registrar KS Anil Kumar with immediate effect for allegedly issuing a notice cancelling a private programme, which was attended by Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar at the Senate Hall, where a portrait of Bharat Mata carrying a saffron flag was displayed. The order alleged that the Registrar, on 25 June, cancelled the sanction granted to Sree Padmanabha Seva Samithi for the use of the University Senate Hall after the programme had commenced and while the Governor –who also serves as Chancellor of the University -was on stage. State General Education Minister V Sivankutty criticised the VC, accusing him of "acting like a goon" of the Governor. *—PTI*

Sanjeev Arora joins Punjab cabinet as Dhaliwal quits

CHANDIGARH, 3 JULY

Sanjeev Arora, newly elected MLA for Ludhiana West, was sworn in as a Cabinet minister on Thursday, following the resignation of Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, as part of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's seventh Cabinet reshuffle in three years. Arora takes over Dhaliwal's former portfolio of NRI Affairs and is also assigned Industry and Commerce and Investment Promotion, previously held by Tarunpreet Singh Sond, who will now oversee Tourism & Culture Affairs, Labour, Hospitality, and Rural Development & Panchayats. Upon announcing his resignation, Dhaliwal expressed his continued commitment to the welfare of Punjab's citizens, stating that he had been informed that another individual would be appointed to the Cabinet. *—PTI*

Gadkari announces projects worth ₹2L cr in J'khand

GARHWA, 3 JULY

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to bolstering infrastructure in Jharkhand, announcing national highway projects worth Rs 2 lakh crore. Addressing a public gathering in Garhwa, he said Rs 40,000 crore-worth projects have been completed, Rs 70,000 crore are underway, and Rs 75,000 crore are in the pipeline. Major corridors such as Varanasi-Ranchi-Kolkata, Ranchi-Varanasi, and Delhi-Kolkata will be completed by 2028, he said. He inaugurated and laid foundation stones for projects exceeding Rs 6,300 crore. Jharkhand's highway network has grown from 2,600km in 2014 to 4,470km, linking all 19 aspirational districts. *—PTI*

Didi writes to Shah for guidelines on social media

KOLKATA, 3 JULY

Expressing concern over the impact of provocative social media content and cybercrime, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and stressed the need for stringent legislative and policy interventions. Misleading stories and fake videos in social media contribute significantly to aggravating criminal tendencies, inflaming communal sentiments, inciting violence and disrupting societal harmony, the CM wrote. In April this year, the Muslim-majority district of Murshidabad witnessed large-scale violence when a protest against the passed Waqf (Amendment) Act spiraled into communal riots, resulting in multiple deaths. The CM also pointed out other instances of communal violence including ones witnessed in Howrah and Hooghly in the recent past during the Ram Navami celebrations. *—PTI*

Modi inks 4 MOUs with Ghana Prez

Defence, vaccines, food security discussed

ACCRA, 3 JULY

India and Ghana have elevated their ties to the level of comprehensive partnership, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama resolving to expand the bilateral ties in a range of areas, including defence, food security and pharmaceuticals, especially vaccines.

In his media statement after the talks on Wednesday, Modi said both sides have set a target of doubling the two-way trade in the next five years and that India is "not just a partner but a co-traveller in Ghana's nation building".

Following the Modi-Mahama talks, the two sides inked four pacts that will provide for cooperation in several areas, including culture and traditional medicine. "We've discussed cooperation in vaccine production," he noted.

Mahama said Ghana is keen to sign formal agreements with India on defence cooperation, vaccine production and supply of agricultural machinery. "Both countries will work to deepen economic and investment relations as Ghana is undergoing economic restructuring due to the debt treatments we are undergoing in the IMF programme."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama in Accra, Ghana on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

In the field of defence and security, we will move forward with the mantra of "security through solidarity", Modi added. Cooperation will be enhanced in areas such as training of armed forces, maritime security, defence supply and cyber security.

Modi said there would be an upswing in trade relations.

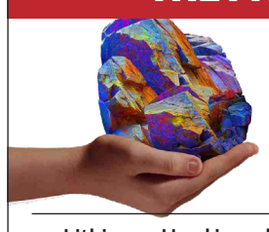
"Indian companies have invested nearly two billion dollars in about 900 projects. Today, we have set a target to double our mutual trade in the next five years," he said.

"India is ready to share its experience of UPI digital payments with Ghana," he said.

Modi also said that Indian companies will cooperate in the exploration and mining of critical minerals.

India is among the top trading partners of Ghana and is the largest destination for Ghanaian exports, driven largely by India's import of gold. *—PTI*

THE FIGHT FOR RARE EARTH MINERALS



WHAT ARE 'RARE' EARTH MINERALS?

Rare earth minerals, mainly used in electric vehicles, are made from elements that aren't actually rare but are hard to find in large amounts in Earth's crust. This makes them difficult and expensive to extract, even though they are important for modern technology. They are a group of 17 naturally occurring elements.

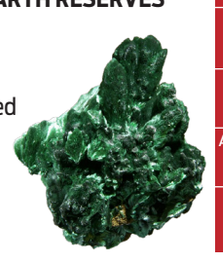
- Lithium – Used in rechargeable batteries for electric vehicles and portable electronics.
- Cobalt – Known for its magnetic properties and ability to form sturdy heat resistant alloys.
- Graphite - Used in pencils, as machine lubricant, and as electrodes in batteries.
- Tantalum – Used in capacitors and high applications.

WHY DOES INDIA NEED THEM?

- Important for clean energy transition and defence manufacturing.
- They are used to make powerful magnets needed in wind turbines and EVs.
- Mfg sector hit after China imposed curbs on export.
- China controls 70% of global rare earth mining and over 90% of processing.
- Suzuki, Mahindra, Hyundai, Kia, Hero Moto, BMC Maruti Suzuki cut EV production to due to a magnet shortage.

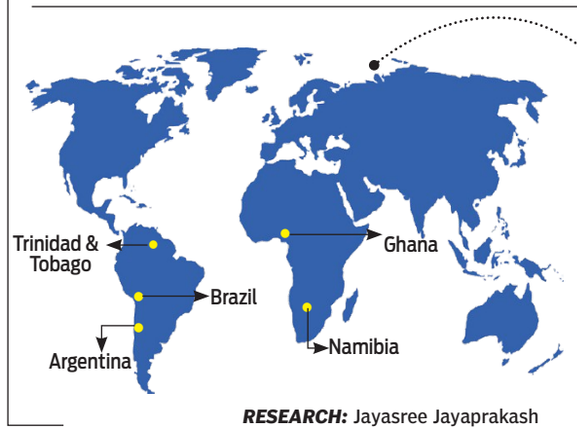
TOP COUNTRIES BY RARE EARTH RESERVES

Country with estimated reserves (Million Metric Tonnes)



China	44
BRAZIL	21
INDIA	6.9
AUSTRALIA	5.7
RUSSIA	3.8

COUNTRIES TOURED BY MODI AND THEIR RARE MINERALS



Country	Resources
Ghana	Manganese, bauxite, iron ore
Namibia	Uranium, lithium
Brazil	Niobium, tantalum, graphite
Argentina	Lithium, copper, silver
Trinidad & Tobago	Natural gas, petrochemicals

RESEARCH: Jayasree Jayaprakash

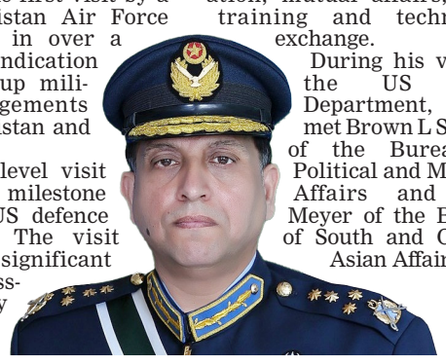
Pak Air Force Chief visits US to reinforce defence ties

ISLAMABAD, 3 JULY

Pakistan's Chief of the Air Staff Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu paid an official visit to the US to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation after Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir recently had lunch with American President Donald Trump.

This was the first visit by a serving Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Chief in over a decade, an indication of stepping up military engagements between Pakistan and the US.

"This high-level visit is a strategic milestone in the Pak-US defence partnership. The visit will play a significant role in addressing key regional and global security issues as well as building institutional ties," a PAF statement said on Wednesday.



At the Pentagon, he met US Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs Kelly L Seybolt and Air Force Chief of Staff General David W Elon, where the two sides agreed to forge new avenues for bilateral military cooperation, mutual affairs, joint training and technology exchange.

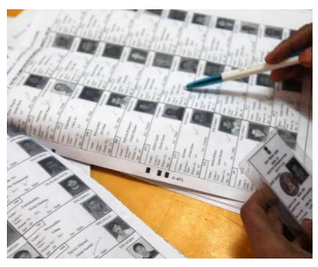
During his visit to the US State Department, Sidhu met Brown L Stanley of the Bureau of Political and Military Affairs and Eric Meyer of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. *—PTI*

Decoded Bihar roll revision to Oppn: EC

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

With political parties flagging their concerns over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Bihar's electoral roll, the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday said it has decoded the entire exercise to a group of Opposition parties to assuage their fears.

Representatives from Opposition parties including Congress, RJD, Samajwadi Party, DMK, NCP (SP), JMM, and CPI(M) met the poll panel



on Wednesday, where they were explained that the exercise is being held in a planned, structured and phased manner to facilitate the inclusion of all eligible citizens.

Divided into five phases, the process started on 25 June and the plan is to publish a draft roll on 1 August.

After that, until 1 September, the public can file claims and objections for corrections or inclusion and the final electoral roll will be published on 30 September.

The ECI's decision to conduct SIR just months ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections.

However, the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind dubbed the process a threat to constitutional rights and electoral fairness. *—PTI*

'Marathi must be spoken...' Minister Kadam on slap row

MUMBAI, 3 JULY

Speaking Marathi in Maharashtra is a must and any perceived disrespect to the language would invite legal consequences, state minister Yogesh Kadam said on Thursday amid outrage over the assault on a food stall owner for not speaking the language.

"In Maharashtra, you have to speak Marathi. If you don't know Marathi, your attitude shouldn't be that you won't speak Marathi…If anyone disrespects Marathi in Maharashtra, we will enforce our laws," Yogesh Kadam said amid outrage over the viral video of a food stall owner in Thane being assaulted allegedly for refusing to speak in Marathi.

Shiv Sena MLA from Dapoli, however, criticised the attack on the food stall owner. "Those who beat up the shopkeeper should not have taken the law into their own hands. They should have filed a complaint. Action would have been taken," he added.

The assault on Babulal Khimji Chaudhary, 48, whose Jodhpur Sweet Shop has been a fixture in Mumbai's Mira Road area for 20 years, sparked widespread criticism, including from Bollywood actor Ranvir Shorey.

The police are yet to make any arrests. *—Agencies*

MNS workers beat a shopkeeper *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Govt to soon collect MP's signs to remove Justice Varma

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Prominent Opposition parties have given their in-principle approval to support the motion to remove Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma and the process of collecting signatures could begin soon, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Thursday.

He said the government is yet to decide whether the motion would be brought in the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha.

For Lok Sabha, a minimum of 100 MP's signatures is required. For the Rajya Sabha, at least 50 MPs need to sign. Rijiju said since the matter involves corruption in the judiciary, the Centre wants all parties to be on board. *—PTI*

Cong slams Gopi's silence on 'Janaki vs State of Kerala' row

T'PURAM, 3 JULY

AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal has vehemently criticised the Censor Board for denying certification to the film 'Janaki Vs State of Kerala' (JSK) and has called out Union Minister Suresh Gopi for his silence on the issue. The film was reportedly rejected due to the use of the name "Janaki," another name for Goddess Sita, for its lead character, who embarks on a legal battle after being assaulted.

In a Facebook post, Venugopal urged Gopi, who stars in the film, to vocalise his support for both the film and his fellow artists. He accused the Censor Board of infringing upon artistic freedom and claimed that denying such titles stands as an affront to the Constitution.

KC Venugopal *PHOTO: ANI*

Highlighting the historical use of names from Hindu mythology in Indian cinema, Venugopal expressed his full backing for the film's creators.

He voiced concern over a broader trend of censorship encroaching on artistic expression and urged the central government to clarify its stance.

The Kerala High Court is set to watch 'Janaki Vs State of Kerala' on 5 July before making a decision regarding the contested title. *—PTI*

Stalin kickstarts DMK's enrolment drive

CHENNAI, 3 JULY

The ruling DMK on Thursday kickstarted a 45-day door-to-door campaign across the state to enroll as party members, 30 percent voters in every polling station under the "Oraniyil Tamil Nadu" (Tamil Nadu as a single team) membership drive.

While party President and Chief Minister MK Stalin met people at Alwarpet and set in motion the membership enrolment process, DMK workers reached out to the public in their respective areas.

MK Stalin *PHOTO: ANI*

"Do you think Tamil Nadu's language should be protected," was one of the questions posed.

"Did people want a CM who does not bow before 'Delhi's authority," was another. *—PTI*

TN custodial death witness claims he received death threats

M Sakthiswaran, a crucial witness in the alleged custodial death of Ajith Kumar, has petitioned the Tamil Nadu Director General of Police, requesting armed protection due to threats following his submission of video evidence showing police officers allegedly torturing Kumar. The 34-year-old temple worker from Madapuram captured footage of Kumar being beaten on 28 June. He claims that S Raja, one of the arrested officers, has a criminal record and was involved in the assault.

SHARP U-TURN

Delhi govt: Ban on old vehicles not feasible

FROM 01.07.2025
Fuel will not be dispensed to "End of Life" Vehicles i.e. 15 years old
Petrol
and 10 years old Diesel Vehicles
By Order : DELHI GOVERNMENT

Following a 2018 Supreme Court ruling, the Delhi government on 1 July, banned fuel for end-of-life vehicles *PHOTO: ANI*

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The Delhi government has written to the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), saying the fuel ban on overage vehicles is not feasible due to technological challenges and complex systems.

Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Delhi Environment minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Thursday said that there was discontent among people due to this move and the government stood with them.

The government has suggested that the ban should be implemented across the National Capital Region (NCR), he added and slammed the previous AAP regime for fixing "strong norms" for overage vehicles.

Following a 2018 Supreme Court ruling, the Delhi government on 1 July banned fuel for end-of-life vehicles -- 10 years or older for diesel vehicles and 15 years or older for petrol vehicles -- that are deregistered and not allow to ply on the roads as per the court's orders.

Officials had begun impounding end-of-life vehicles reaching at the petrol pumps for refuelling after implementation of the ban. *—PTI*

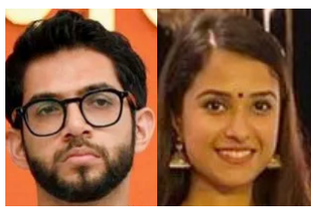
Salian death a suicide, Maharashtra cops tell HC

MUMBAI, 3 JULY

Former celebrity manager Disha Salian died by suicide and no foul play has been found in her death, the Mumbai police have submitted to the Bombay High Court, even as her father Satish Salian reiterated she was gang-raped and murdered.

Disha Salian jumped off the window of a flat out of her own volition, and the post-mortem report mentions no signs of sexual and/or physical assault on the deceased, the police said in an affidavit filed before the HC last month.

She was under tremendous mental stress due to a dispute with her family and also



because her business deals were not working out, the affidavit added.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut demanded an apology from Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and minister Nitesh Rane over their past remarks against MLA Aaditya Thackeray in connection with Disha Salian death case. *—PTI*

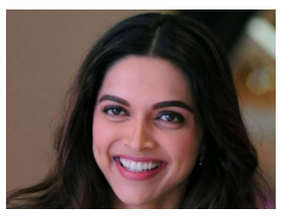


PHOTO: FB

Deepika to get star on Hollywood Walk of Fame

LOS ANGELES, 3 JULY

Deepika Padukone will become the first Indian actor to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, marking a historic moment for India in the global film industry. Announced by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, the honour will be presented as part of the Walk of Fame Class of 2026. With over 2,700 stars along Hollywood Boulevard, the Walk of Fame celebrates significant contributions to film, television, and music. Making her Bollywood debut in 2007's 'Om Shanti Om', she gained international recognition with 'XXX: Return of Xander Cage.' She also featured on TIME magazine's 100 most influential people list in 2018. Currently, Padukone is working in several projects. *—PTI*

Frustrated of barking, MP man kills 5 puppies

JABALPUR, 3 JULY

A man in Jabalpur has been arrested for allegedly beating five puppies to death out of frustration over their incessant barking. The incident took place on 30 June in the Maharajpur locality of Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur and came to light following a complaint to local authorities. Animal activists shared video evidence of the incident. The carcass of one puppy has been sent for a post-mortem examination. The accused, Rajesh Dahiya was charged for obscenity and animal cruelty. He also verbally abused the activists when confronted about the killings. The incident has drawn the attention of animal rights groups, prompting calls for stricter laws regarding animal welfare in the region. *—PTI*

Man kills pregnant wife over 'excess salt' in food

FARUKHABAD, 3 JULY

A man in Uttar Pradesh allegedly killed his five-month pregnant wife by beating her, which led to her falling from the roof of their house in the Kasganj district, officials said on Thursday. The assault allegedly stemmed from a domestic dispute over excess salt in the food she cooked on Wednesday evening, the police said. Despite being rushed to the hospital, Brajbala, 25, succumbed to her injuries. The victim's brother has now alleged that the man's extra-marital affair led to frequent dispute between the couple. The accused has been apprehended and an investigation is underway. -PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Actor's son dies by suicide after quarrel on tution

MUMBAI, 3 JULY

The 14-year-old son of an actor allegedly died by suicide on Thursday at a high-rise in Kandivali in the northern part of Mumbai after an argument over going to tuition, a police official said. The incident took place at 6pm on Wednesday at a residential complex where the actor, who has worked in popular Gujarati and Hindi television serials, stays in a 51st floor flat, the official said. No foul play is suspected, an accidental death report has been registered and further probe is underway, added the cop. Sources said police might visit the deceased's school and tuition centre as part of the probe. *—PTI*

Insurance firms need not pay in rash-driving deaths: SC

Accident victim's family sought Rs 80 lakh compensation

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The Supreme Court has ruled that insurance companies are not liable to pay compensation to the families of individuals who die as a result of their own rash and reckless driving.

A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and R Mahadevan refused to grant Rs 80 lakh compensation sought by the wife, son and parents of a man, who had died while driving a car at high speed.

The top court refused to interfere with the Karnataka High Court's 2024 order that dismissed the plea filed by the deceased's legal heirs.

"We are not inclined to interfere with the impugned judgment passed by the high court. Hence, the Special Leave Petition is dismissed," the bench said in an order passed on Wednesday.

On 18 June 2014, NS Ravisha was driving from Mallasandra village to Arasikere town when the accident took place. His father, sister and her children were travelling in the car with him.

The Supreme Court refused to interfere with Karnataka HC's ruling

PHOTO: PTI

The court had found that Ravisha drove the car in a negligent manner without following traffic rules and lost control over the vehicle which toppled on the road. Ravisha sustained fatal injuries in the accident.

- Ravisha, the victim was driving the car from Mallasandra village to Arasikere town when the accident took place. His father, sister and her children were travelling in the car with him.

The HC had held that since the accident had occurred due to the rash driving of the deceased himself and him being self tortfeasor, the legal heirs could not claim any compensation for his death and that it would amount to a person committing breach getting compensation for his own wrongdoings. *– PTI*

A vehicle turns turtle following a flash floods in Mandi PHOTO: PTI

Himachal cloudburst: 14 dead, 31 missing

SHIMLA/RUDRAPRAYAG, 3 JULY

With the recovery of three more bodies, the death toll in the cloudburst and flash flood-related incidents in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi has mounted to 14, while search is underway for 31 others who are missing.

10 cloudbursts, three flash floods and a landslide were witnessed in different parts of Mandi on 1 July.

Apart from the deceased and still missing people, 162 cattle perished while 370 people, including 316 in Mandi, were rescued.

261 roads across the state are closed for traffic. The Manali-Keylong road was blocked near Solang Nallah and the traffic has been diverted through Rohtang Pass.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur had visited the affected areas on Wednesday. Sukhu assured locals that government land would be allotted to those who lost their homes.

An orange alert was issued in isolated areas across the state from 5 to 9 July. Isolated places in Kangra, Mandi, Hamirpur, Shimla, Solan and Sirmaur districts are at risk of flash floods.

Meanwhile, the pilgrimage to Kedarnath was suspended temporarily on Thursday following a landslide at Munkatiya near Sonprayag en route to the Himalayan temple.

Pilgrims returning from Gaurikund and trapped in Munkatiya sliding zone were rescued and brought to Sonprayag.

The flood situation across India showed a marginal improvement, with 10 river stations reporting water levels above the warning mark, down from 12 such sites a day earlier.

Several rivers in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu were in spate. *– PTI*

Fire and rescue personnel during a rescue operation at the site of explosion at the Sigachi Industries' pharma plant, in Sangareddy district, Telangana PHOTO: PTI

T'gana explosion: 9 missing, expert committee to visit plant

SANGAREDDY, 3 JULY

Efforts are on to trace nine people missing after the 30 June explosion at the Sigachi Industries' pharma plant in Pashamylaram that claimed at least 38 lives and left 35 injured, Superintendent of Police, Paritosh Pankaj said on Thursday.

The expert committee appointed by Telangana government is expected to visit the site on Thursday to understand what caused the explosion and submit a detailed report in a month.

It is headed by Dr B Venkateswar Rao, Emeritus Scientist at CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology.

"Death toll remains at 38. Nine people are missing. But maybe today or tomorrow, once we get the reports of bones and other things from FSL (Forensic Science Lab), then things will be clear," said a district administration official. He said 90 per cent of the debris removal was over and is not anticipating any bodies to surface further.

Meanwhile, the injured people being treated at hospitals are expected to be discharged on Thursday. *—PTI*

Stranded British fighter jet to be dismantled

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The United Kingdom is considering the option of taking back home its F-35B stealth fighter jet –stranded for 19 days at Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram International Airport following an unscheduled landing last month – aboard a C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft.

The Lockheed Martin's fifth-generation short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft had requested permission to land at the Kerala airport after being unable to return to the Royal Navy's flagship aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales in the Indo-Pacific. The British High Commission said last week, "A UK F-35 aircraft was unable to return to HMS Prince of Wales due to adverse weather conditions. Prioritising safety, the aircraft diverted to Thiruvananthapuram International Airport in India, where it landed safely. The aircraft has subsequently developed an engineering issue whilst on the ground which precluded its return to the Carrier." *—PTI*

No relief for Jacqueline

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Thursday dismissed a plea by Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez for quashing an FIR against her in a Rs 200 crore money laundering case, involving alleged conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar. The plea also sought to quash the second supplementary chargesheet of the Enforcement Directorate in the case and proceedings pending in a Delhi trial court. The ED counsel opposed the petition on the ground of maintainability, saying a special court had taken cognisance of the prosecution complaint (chargesheet) and prima facie found a case. *—PTI*

Angry domestic help kills Delhi woman & teen son

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

A woman and her teenage son were killed allegedly by their domestic help at their home in the Lajpat Nagar area of south-east Delhi after the woman scolded the latter.

Investigation revealed that the accused slit the throat of the woman and killed the child in a fit of rage.

The accused, **Mukesh (pic)**, 24, was nabbed by Uttar Pradesh Police from a train while he was trying to flee.

The matter came to light when a PCR call was received from Kuldeep Sewani, a resident of Lajpat Nagar I, at 9.43 pm on Wednesday. He said his wife **Ruchika**, 42, and 14-year-old son were not responding to calls and that there were bloodstains on the staircase of their house, police said.

When the police rushed to the spot, they found the gate open and bodies of Ruchika and her son were found inside.

While the woman's body was found in the bedroom, her son's body was found in the bathroom, he said. *—PTI*

- Investigation revealed that the accused slit the throat of the woman and killed the child in a fit of rage

Transwoman gets dumped after gender change

BHOPAL, 3 JULY

A 25-year-old individual from Madhya Pradesh who underwent a gender reassignment procedure has accused her alleged partner of rape and physical abuse after he refused to marry her after the surgery.

The duo met 10 years ago and lived together in a same-sex relationship, police said on Thursday. The complainant said the accused pressed her to undergo the gender-affirming surgery. The complainant underwent the surgery in an Indore hospital to become a woman. The complainant was medically examined, which confirmed her gender change, police said. A case has been booked under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. *— PTI*

JUVENILES ACCUSED

Delhi boy stripped, stabbed to death by 8

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

A 14-year-old boy was allegedly killed by eight people including four juveniles, who took turns to stab him multiple times before dumping his naked body into a canal in north Delhi's Haiderpur area.

The victim, a resident of Jeevan Park in Siraspur, was reportedly abducted, stripped and killed in a revenge-driven attack.

His body was found with multiple stab wounds and a scarf tied around the neck near the Munak Canal on 1 July.

The police registered a case and nabbed Krishna alias Bhola, 19, Ashmit alias Ashwani, 18, and four more juveniles.

Krishna was allegedly assaulted last year by two local criminals and he suspected the deceased to have acted as an informer and abducted him.

A manhunt is on to nab the two criminals - Monu and Mohit - who reportedly fled to Haridwar. *—PTI*

- His body was found with multiple stab wounds and a scarf tied around the neck

AIIMS opposes minor rape survivor's abortion

BHADOHI, 3 JULY

A minor rape survivor seeking to terminate her 27-week pregnancy has agreed to continue with it, following medical advice from AIIMS doctors, the Delhi High Court was told on Thursday.

The AIIMS medical board informed the court that terminating the pregnancy at this stage would amount to foeticide and could harm the girl's reroductive health in the future. The court then directed her to remain at AIIMS until after delivery and receive free medical care for five years for both herself and the child. Terming the case unfortunate, the court also asked the Delhi government to outline its plan for supposting the survivor by 15 October. *—PTI*

RAMDEV AT IT AGAIN

Patanjali barred from airing ads insulting Dabur Chyawanprash

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Thursday restrained Patanjali from running disparaging advertisements against Dabur Chyawanprash.

Justice Mini Pushkarna allowed the interim injunction on Dabur's plea, which alleged Patanjali Special Chyawanprash was disparaging DABUR Chyawanprash specifically and Chyawanprash in general by claiming that "no other manufacturer has the knowledge to prepare Chyawanprash" -- constituting generic disparagement.

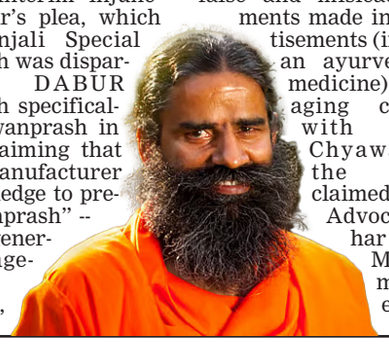
"In addition, false and misleading statements made in the advertisements (in respect of an ayurvedic drug/ medicine), in disparaging comparison with Dabur Chyawanprash," the petition claimed.

Advocates Jawahar Lala and Meghna Kumar appeared for Dabur.

The petition further claimed the advertisement used the prefix 'ordinary' with respect to all other Chyawanprash, denoting that they were of 'inferior' quality.

The advertisement also made 'untrue' claims that all other manufacturers had no knowledge of Ayurvedic texts and the formulae used to prepare Chyawanprash, it added.

The court posted the next hearing on 14 July. *—PTI*



Lock student union rooms until elections: WB HC

KOLKATA, 3 JULY

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday ordered the closure of students' union rooms across colleges and universities in West Bengal where student elections are pending.

The HC barred recreational use of these rooms, allowing access only for official purposes with prior approval. The directive comes in the backdrop of the gang rape of a student at South Calcutta Law College on 25 June. Monojit Mishra, the prime accused, allegedly used the room to intimidate and exploit students.

The court also instructed the state government to submit an affidavit outlining plans to hold overdue student elections. The matter will be heard again on 17 July. *—PTI*

In-laws strangle UP woman to death over dowry

BHADOHI, 3 JULY

Nearly two months after her wedding, a woman was killed allegedly by her in-laws in Uttar Pradesh after she failed to fulfil their dowry demands, police said on Thursday.

While her in-laws claimed she died by suicide, her family alleged she was strangled to death by her husband and his family. Four people, including the woman's husband, have been booked, police said.

According to the FIR, Roshni Vishwakarma married Pradeep Vishwakarma on 6 March under the Uttar Pradesh government's 'Mukhyamantri Samuhik Vivah Yojana'. However, Pradeep's family was dissatisfied over not receiving dowry and insisted on holding another wedding ceremony to pressure Roshni's family.

After the ceremony, Roshni's in-laws started harassing her and demanding gold and cash, who eventually killed her on 15 June. The accused then took her body to a community health centre, nearly 20 kilometres from their home in an attempt to destroy evidence, the FIR read.

Inspector Amit Kumar Singh of Gopiganj police station said Pradeep, his mother, father and sister have been booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Dowry Prohibition Act.

The investigation into the case is being led by Circle Officer Chaman Singh Chawda. *—PTI*

INTO THE WILD

Three European mountaineers scaled the formidable Nanga Parbat in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, with two of them skiing down the peak nicknamed 'Killer Mountain', while one paraglided down off the peak. German David Göttler glided off from an altitude of about 7,700 metres
PHOTO: X

US contractors using force at Gaza aid sites: Report

The American contractors, now in charge of aid distribution in Gaza, reportedly found pleasure in firing pepper spray, throwing stun grenades and firing shots into the crowd
PHOTO: PTI

American contractors guarding aid distribution sites in Gaza are using live ammunition and stun grenades as hungry Palestinians scramble for food, according to accounts and videos obtained by The Associated Press.

Two US contractors, said they were coming forward because they were disturbed by what they considered dangerous and irresponsible practices. They said the security staff hired were often unqualified, unvetted, heavily armed and seemed to have an open license to do whatever they wished.

The testimonies from the contractors — combined with the videos, internal reports and text messages— offer a rare glimpse inside the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, the newly created American organisation backed by Israel to feed the Gaza Strip's population.

Last month, the US government pledged USD 30 million for the group to continue operations — the first known US donation to the group, whose other funding sources remain opaque.

Journalists have been unable to access the GHF sites, located in Israeli military-controlled zones.

Gaza's more than 2 million Palestinians are living through a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. For 2 1/2 months before GHF's opening in May, Israel blocked all food, water and medicine from entering Gaza, claiming Hamas was stealing the aid being transported under a preexisting system coordinated by the United Nations.

It now wants GHF to replace that UN system.

Since the GHF sites began operating more than a month ago, Palestinians say Israeli troops open fire almost every day toward crowds on roads heading to the distribution points, through Israeli military zones. Several hundred people have been killed and hundreds more wounded, according to Gaza's Health Ministry and witnesses.

Israel's military denies deliberately shooting at any civilians and says it's examining how to reduce "friction with the population".

AP spoke to the two contractors for UG Solutions, an American outfit subcontracted to hire security personnel for the distribution sites. They said bullets, stun grenades and pepper spray were used at nearly every distribution, even if there was no threat. Videos of aid being dispensed at the sites seen by the AP appear to back up the frenetic scenes the contractors described. The footage was taken within the first two weeks of its distributions — about halfway into the operations.

In videos furnished by the contractor, men in grey uniforms — colleagues, he said — can be seen trying to clear Palestinians who are squeezed into a narrow, fenced-in passage leading to one of the centres.

The men fire pepper spray and throw stun grenades that detonate amid the crowd. The sound of gunfire can be heard. In one video, what appear to be heavily armed American security contractors at one of the sites in Gaza discuss how to disperse Palestinians nearby.

Bursts of gunfire erupt close by, at least 15 shots. "Whoo! Whoo!" one contractor yelps.

"I think you hit one," one says.

Then comes a shout: "Hell, yeah, boy!"

The camera's view is obscured by a large dirt mound.

The contractor who took the video told AP that he saw other contractors shooting in the direction of Palestinians who had just collected their food and were departing.

The men shot both from a tower above the site and from atop the mound, he said. The shooting began because contractors wanted to disperse the crowd, he said, but it was unclear why they continued shooting as people were walking away.

According to the contractor, the Israeli army is leveraging the distribution system to access information.

Both contractors said that cameras monitor distributions at each site and that American analysts and Israeli soldiers sit in a control room where the footage is screened in real time.

The contractor who took the videos said some cameras are equipped with facial recognition software. In live shots of the sites, some videos streams are labelled "analytics" — those were the ones that had the facial recognition software, said the contractor. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

13% children born prematurely in India

India's demographic health survey 2019-21 reveals that 13 per cent of children were born prematurely, and 17 per cent with a low weight at birth, with air pollution contributing to the adverse birth outcomes.

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, and institutes in the UK and Ireland looked at the National Family Health Survey-5 and remote sensing data to analyse how exposure to air pollution in pregnancy impacted the delivery outcomes.

The team found that an increased exposure to PM2.5 during pregnancy was related with a 40 per cent chance of low birth weight, and 70 per cent of premature delivery.

Climate conditions, such as rainfall and temperature, were found to have a greater link with adverse birth outcomes.

The study, published in the journal PLoS Global Public Health, also found that children living in the northern districts of India could be more vulnerable to the ambient air pollution. Measuring under 2.5 microns in diameter, fine particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) is considered among the most harmful air pollutants, sources of which include burning of fossil fuels and biomass.

The researchers found higher levels of PM2.5 pollutants over the upper Gangetic region, covering states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Punjab and Haryana, and lower levels in the country's southern and north-eastern regions.

A higher prevalence of premature births was seen in northern states, such as Himachal Pradesh (39 per cent), Uttarakhand (27 per cent), Rajasthan (18 per cent), and Delhi (17 per cent).

Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura exhibited a lower prevalence of the trend.

Punjab was found to have the highest prevalence of lower birth weight at 22 per cent, followed by Delhi, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh.

North-east India fared far better on the metric, the authors said.

"Utilising data from the national family health survey and raster images, the study employs various statistical analyses and spatial models to elucidate the connection between in-utero exposure to air pollution and birth outcomes," the authors wrote.

They "observed that approximately 13 per cent of children were born prematurely, and 17 per cent were born with low birth weight."

Further, an increase of 10 microgram per cubic metre in PM2.5 exposure was associated with an increase of five per cent in the prevalence of low birth weight, and 12 per cent in premature birth.

The team added that 18 per cent of children born in the five years preceding the National Family Health Survey-5 had a low weight at birth.

The authors called for targeted interventions, especially in the northern districts, and an intensification of the National Clean Air Program. *—PTI*

Climate conditions, such as rainfall and temperature, were found to have a greater link with adverse birth outcomes than previously thought
PHOTO: PIXABAY

Dalai Lama's unexpected connection with the trans community

Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, turns 90 this week – a milestone that's reigniting speculation over his eventual successor. While the Dalai Lama is the face of Buddhism to many people across the world, he is actually the head of just one tradition within Tibetan Buddhism known as the Gelug school.

Tibetans believe the Dalai Lama to be the manifestation of Avalokite vara, the bodhisattva of compassion, and the "one who hears the cries of the world".

Avalokite vara is prayed to across Asia, and is known as Chenrezig in Tibet, Guanyin in China, and Kannon or Kanzeon in Japan.

In Buddhism, a bodhisattva is a person, or a mythic representation of a person, who denies themselves enlightenment until all beings can achieve enlightenment. Avalokite vara appears to living beings in whatever form could best save them.

Although Avalokite vara originated in India as a man, they can be depicted as either a man, woman, or non-binary being. This gender fluidity has led to them being revered as a trans icon in the West.

The words of these individuals reveal how the Dalai Lama emerges an unlikely inspiration for individuals sharing a trans and Buddhist identity.

LGBTQIA+ Buddhist Australians, who were interviewed for this study, are generally reluctant to disclose their queer identities to their Buddhist communities, and may be told to remain silent about their identities.

For some, Avalokite vara's gender fluidity has been important for reaffirming both their queer and Buddhist selves.

One Buddhist trans woman, Annie, said that Guanyin had special significance for her. Annie spoke about Avalokite vara travelling from India to China as a male, before "transitioning" to the mainly female presentation of Guanyin over centuries. Annie said:

"I pray to her regularly and often find I get a response. Of course the enlightened state is beyond all manner of worldly binaries, including gender, and is immensely important in letting go of binaries in my journey towards enlightenment."

Walter has had a long fascination with depictions of Avalokite vara that "showed 'him' looking effeminate and handsome, with a cute moustache […] A little bit homoerotic, a little bit provocatively gender fluid, as seen through my eyes". Walter adds:

"A great many people in different cultures, across history, worship these figures. Clever how this figure can morph into a radical trans! We all want to feel comforted, safe and saved from suffering. As queer Buddhists, we turn to Avalokitesvara to feel "comforted, safe and saved".

Another interviewee, Brian, spoke about a Tibetan invocation practice he did with a senior Tibetan monk, in which he encountered Guanyin: "[She] took my right hand and passed some sort of power into it. She never spoke to me but just returned the way she had come. I was given some sort of gift, that's all I know. Since this experience, Brian has "always felt a strong connection to the feminine through her". He has a special Guanyin altar on his farm.

Some Buddhists deny Avalokite vara's queerness. Asher, a genderqueer Buddhist talked about a teacher who said to them, "there was absolutely no way a gay person could be enlightened". Asher retorted: "What about Kanzeon, the bodhisattva of compassion, who has manifested as both male and female and, in the stories from Japan, has had erotic relationships with monks?"

The teacher dismissed this, replying, "those are just stories".

Knowing Avalokitesvara may be depicted as a man, woman, or non-binary being queer Buddhists assert that exist– and have always existed – within Buddhism.

Despite being a cisgender man who has been somewhat inconsistent in his support of queer people, the Dalai Lama, as the manifestation of the bodhisattva of compassion, is a possible spiritual link between today's queer Buddhists and centuries-long traditions of gender transition and fluidity. *—PTI*

Although Avalokite vara originated in India as a man, they can be depicted as either a man, woman, or non-binary being. This gender fluidity has led to them being revered as a trans icon in the West
PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: X

Diddy denied bail after mixed verdict in sex crimes case

NEW YORK, 3 JULY

Sean "Diddy" Combs has been denied bail as he awaits sentencing after being convicted of lesser prostitution-related offences in a high-profile trial. The rapper was acquitted of sex trafficking and racketeering charges that could have led to a life sentence but found guilty of violations related to transporting individuals for sexual purposes. Combs' Attorney, Marc Agnifilo, hailed the verdict as a significant victory, emphasising that the jury got "the situation right". The mixed verdict followed a turbulent eight-week legal battle. After the decision, Combs, 55, expressed love to his family as he returned to jail. Prosecutors argue he could face four to five years in prison, while defence lawyers suggest a sentence of about two years is more probable. *—PTI*

Bali ferry capsize: 31 rescued, hunt on for 30 still missing

GILIMAUNK, 3 JULY

Rescuers were searching on Thursday for 30 people who were missing after a ferry sank and four people died the previous night near Indonesia's resort island of Bali. As of Thursday afternoon, 31 people had been rescued from the ferry's 53 passengers and 12 crew members, the National Search and Rescue Agency said in a statement. The KMP Tunu Pratama Jaya sank half an hour after leaving Ketapang port in the East Java town of Banyuwangi late Wednesday for a 50m trip to Bali's Gilimanuk port, authorities said. A helicopter and nine boats searched for survivors with assistance from fishermen and people onshore. Strong waves up to 2m high and darkness hampered the search overnight, but an official said improved weather and sea conditions on Thursday morning helped. *—PTI*

7-Eleven staffer dies after manager sits on her chest

LOS ANGELES, 3 JULY

Jessica McLaughlin, a 24-year-old 7-Eleven employee, tragically passed away on Wednesday after being left brain-dead following an assault by her manager. The incident occurred on 24 June during an argument at a 7-Eleven store in Los Angeles. Allegedly, the manager sat on Jessica's chest, suffocating her and preventing her from breathing, leading to severe oxygen deprivation. Colleagues attempted to intervene but sustained injuries during the altercation. Jessica collapsed shortly after freeing herself and called for emergency assistance. Despite being rushed to hospital, she was declared brain-dead two days prior to her family deciding to take her off life support. Reports indicate that the manager fled the scene on a bicycle and is currently at large, with police treating the case as homicide. *—PTI*

Drive-by shooting in Chicago kills 4, injures 14

CHICAGO, 3 JULY

Four people died from gunshot wounds and 14 others were hospitalised following a drive-by shooting in Chicago, police said Thursday. At least three were in critical condition. The shooting happened late Wednesday in Chicago's River North neighbourhood. Several media outlets said it happened outside a nightclub that had hosted an album release party for rapper DooWop. Someone opened fire into a crowd standing outside, police said, and the vehicle immediately drove away. No one was in custody, police said. *—PTI*

Trump's 'Big Beautiful Bill' faces final vote

The 800-pager contains about $4.5T tax cuts; Legislation clears Round-1 with 219–213 votes

WASHINGTON, 3 JULY

Up all night, House Republicans voted before dawn on Thursday to advance President Donald Trump's tax and spending cuts package after GOP leaders worked almost around the clock trying to persuade sceptical holdouts as they race to send the bill to his desk by the Fourth of July deadline.

A roll call that started late Wednesday finally closed almost six hours later, a highly unusual stall on a procedural step.

Trump, who had hosted lawmakers at the White House earlier, lashed out at the delay. Once the gavel struck, 219-213, the Bill advanced to a last round of debates toward a final vote, which is expected later Thursday morning.

"Our way is to plough through and get it done," House Speaker Mike Johnson said, emerging in the middle of the night from a series of closed-door meetings. "We will meet our 4th July deadline."

Republicans have struggled mightily with the Bill nearly every step of the way, often succeeding by the narrowest of margins — just one vote. Their slim 220-212 majority leaves little room for defections.

Several Republicans are balking at being asked to rubber-stamp the Senate version less than 24 hours after passage. A number of moderate Republicans from competitive districts have objected to the Senate bill's cuts to Medicaid.

"What are the Republicans waiting for??? What are you trying to prove???" Trump railed in a post-midnight vote. He also warned starkly of political fallout from the delay "COSTING YOU VOTES!!!"

The Bill totally contains about USD 4.5 trillion in tax cuts over 10 years.

It also provides about USD 350 billion for defence and Trump's immigration crackdown. Republicans partially pay for it all through less spending on Medicaid and food assistance.

The Congressional Budget Office projects the Bill will add about USD 3.3 trillion to the federal debt over the coming decade. *—PTI*

Republicans have struggled mightily with the Bill nearly every step of the way, often succeeding by the narrowest of margins **PHOTO: X**

Russia never supported Trump in 2016 polls: CIA

WASHINGTON, 3 JULY

A declassified CIA memo released Wednesday challenges the intelligence agency conclusion that Russia interfered in the 2016 Presidential election to elect Republican Donald Trump.

The memo was written on the orders of CIA Director John Ratcliffe, a Trump loyalist, who spoke out against the Russia investigation as a member of Congress.

It finds fault with a 2017 intelligence assessment that concluded the Russian government, at the direction of President Vladimir Putin, waged a covert influence campaign to help Trump win.

It does not address that multiple investigations since then, including from the Republican-led Senate Intelligence Committee in 2020, which reached the same conclusion about Russia's influence and motives.

The report takes particular aim at the inclusion of a two-page summary by a former British spy, Christopher Steele, which included salacious and uncorroborated rumours about Trump's ties to Russia, in the intelligence community assessment.

But even as Ratcliffe faulted top intelligence officials for a "politically charged environment that triggered an atypical analytic process," his agency's report did not directly contradict any previous intelligence. *—PTI*

Mamdani should be deported: Trump

Trump threatened Indian-origin New York Mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani, with many perceiving it as an attempt to deport him. "I'm not going to let this Communist Lunatic destroy New York. Rest assured, I hold all the levers, and have all the cards," Trump wrote on his Truth Social. Mamdani hit back, saying "Trump said that I should be arrested. He said that I should be deported... It is less so because of who I am, because of where I come from, because of how I look or how I speak, and more so because he wants to distract from what I fight for."

US wary of 'lone wolf attacks' on 4 July

As America prepare for massive 4 July gatherings, federal authorities have sounded the alarm over potential security threats from lone-wolf attackers. In a joint threat assessment released ahead of Independence Day, the FBI, and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), say the most likely danger comes from individuals or small extremist groups. They caution that large-scale gatherings are "attractive targets" for both domestic and foreign extremists aiming to cause mass casualties.

Deported man starts eating own arm

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem claimed that a man being deported began to eat himself on the flight. Noem said. "(US Marshals partnered with ICE) said that they had detained a cannibal and put him on a plane to take him home and while they had him in his seat, he started to eat himself, and they had to get him off and get him medical attention."

Noem said the story was proof that immigration authorities were targeting "the worst of the worst" and not law-abiding undocumented migrants, as critics suggest.

A Palestinian girl stands atop the rubble of the Al-Aimawi family's home that was destroyed by Israeli airstrikes in Al-Zawaideh, Gaza Strip, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

94 civilians killed in Gaza, including 45 near aid site

TEL AVIV, 3 JULY

Airstrikes and shootings killed 94 Palestinians in Gaza overnight, including 45 who were attempting to get much-needed humanitarian aid, hospitals and the Health Ministry said on Thursday.

Five people were killed while outside sites associated with the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, the newly-created, secretive American organisation backed by Israel to feed the Gaza Strip's population, while 40 others were killed waiting for aid in other locations across the Gaza Strip.

Dozens of people were killed in airstrikes that pounded the Strip Wednesday night and Thursday morning, including 15 people killed in strikes that hit tents in the sprawling Muwasi zone, where many displaced Palestinians are sheltering.

A separate strike on a school in Gaza City sheltering displaced people also killed 15 people.

Gaza's Health Ministry said the number of Palestinians killed in Gaza has passed 57,000.

The deaths come as US President Donald Trump claimed that Israel had agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire.

Amnesty international meanwhile accused the aid system of using starvation tactics against to continue to commit genocide in the Strip.

SUMMER MAKES THINGS WORSE

The aid shortage in Gaza is going to amplify the humanitarian crisis.

With temperatures exceeding 30 degrees Celsius, the scorching summer coincides with a lack of clean water for the majority of Gaza's population.Only 40 per cent of drinking water production facilities are functioning in the Gaza Strip, according to a recent report by the UN. All face imminent collapse. Up to 93 per cent of households face water shortages, the June report said. *—PTI*

Ukraine kills Russian Navy Chief in Kursk

MOSCOW, 3 JULY

The Deputy Head of the Russian Ravy, Mikhail Gudkov, was killed in combat in Russia's Kursk region, the country's Ministry of Defence said. He is one of the most senior Russian commanders to have been killed since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than three years ago.

Gudkov, who was handed a top military honour in the Kremlin by Russian President Vladimir Putin in February, was killed on Wednesday "during combat work in one of the border districts of Kursk region," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

Kyiv's troops seized parts of the Russian region in a surprise offensive in August 2024. Although Moscow claimed in April to have fully recovered it, clashes in the area have continued.

It was not clear how Gudkov, 42, whose call sign was 'Viking', died or what he was doing in Kursk. Some Russian war bloggers said he had been in overall command of marines advancing in Ukraine's neighbouring Sumy region. At least 10 other senior Russian commanders have been killed in action or assassinated by Kyiv since the start of the war.

There was no immediate comment from the Ukraine government. *—Agencies*

Haiti Gangs have near-total control of capital: UN

UNITED NATIONS, 3 JULY

Haiti's gangs now hold "near-total control" of the capital, Port-au-Prince, with estimates suggesting that 90 per cent of the city is under their influence, according to senior UN officials. Ghada Fathy Waly, from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, shared alarming insights at a UN Security Council meeting, revealing that gang violence has spilled over into previously unaffected regions of the country.

Waly highlighted a rise in gang-related incidents in southern Haiti and increased attacks along critical land routes. The inability of state authorities to govern effectively has allowed criminal groups to establish "parallel governance structures", Wali said. *—PTI*

THAI CABINET, INCLUDING SUSPENDED PM, TAKES OATH

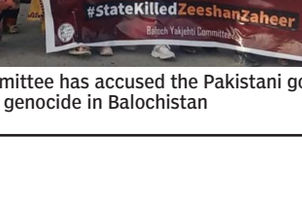
BANGKOK, 3 JULY

Thailand's new Cabinet members took their oaths of office Thursday, including the suspended prime minister who is under an ethics investigation for remarks to a senior Cambodian leader.

Paetongtarn Shinawatra was suspended as PM on Tuesday, the same day Thailand's King endorsed a Cabinet line-up in which she would be the culture minister. She was smiling as she arrived at Government House for the swearing-in ceremony with other new members, but did not answer questions.

Acting Prime Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit led the new Cabinet members at the ceremony to receive the endorsement from King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

Suriya is expected later to assign the acting prime minister duty to Phumtham Wechayachai, who was sworn in Thursday as Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister. Phumtham had been Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister since Paetongtarn took office last year. *—PTI*



MINIMAL IMPACT ON GRID

Heatwave shuts down France, Swiss nuclear plants

PARIS/ATHENS, 3 JULY

With a heatwave scorching Europe, a number of nuclear power plants in Switzerland and France have been forced to either reduce activity or shut down completely as extreme temperatures have prevented sites from relying on water from local rivers, Euro News reported.

To cool down, nuclear power plants pump water from local rivers or the sea, which they then release back into water bodies at a higher temperature.

However, Europe's ongoing heatwave means that the water pumped by nuclear sites is already very hot, meaning it won't adequately cool the nuclear facilities.

Axpo – which operates the Beznau nuclear power plant in Switzerland – said it had shut down one of its reactors on Tuesday, adding that a second reactor was operating at limited capacity.

"Axpo has been increasingly reducing the output of the two reactor units at the Beznau nuclear power plant for days and reduced it to 50 per cent on Sunday," said the operator.

The impact on France's energy grid remains limited, despite the fact that more electricity is being used to cool buildings and run air conditioning systems, Euro News said, warning that it would likely worsen in the near future.

Heatwave raises temperature of water bodies, reducing cooling efficiency of plants

To cool down the reactors, nuclear power plants circulate water from local rivers or the sea **PHOTO: X**

GREEK WILDFIRE FORCES EVACUATION

A fast-moving wildfire whipped by gale-force winds burned through the night and into Thursday on Greece's southern island of Crete, prompting the evacuation of more than 1,500 people from hotels and homes.

The fire department said 230 firefighters backed up by 10 water-dropping aircraft were battling the flames, which have burned through forest and farmland in Crete's Ierapetra area on the island's southern coast. Two people were evacuated by boat overnight, while six private boats were on standby in case further evacuations by sea became necessary, the coast guard said.

Homes were reported damaged as flames swept through hillside forests. *—ANI/PTI*

Balochistan erupts against extra-judicial killing of 3

BALOCHISTAN, 4 JULY

Balochistan erupted in protest on Wednesday after at least three people including Zeeshan Zaheer – fighting for the safe return of his father forcibly disappeared in 2015 by Pakistan's 'Frontier Corps – were killed extra judicially.

The Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC), the leading human rights body protesting such atrocities has alleged that these were part of a systematic campaign towards Baloch genocide and vowed to expose the war crimes.

According to BYC, at least two others were killed by Pakistan's state-backed death squads. Dolat Baloch, 24, was shot dead while walking with his mother. Qadir Bakhsh, an elderly resident and father of two sons previously killed in extrajudicial killings was also forcibly disappeared and was found dead hours later. *—ANI with Agencies*

THE STATE OF PAKISTAN NEVER RETURNED ZEESHAN'S FATHER: NOT IN A DECADE. BUT IT MADE SURE TO RETURN ZEESHAN HIMSELF AS A LIFELESS BODY.
#StateKilledZeeshanZaheer

The Baloch Yakjehti Committee has accused the Pakistani government of a systematic campaign for genocide in Balochistan **PHOTO: X**

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold rises by ₹450 to ₹99,620/10g; silver up ₹1,000

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Gold prices increased by Rs 450 to reach Rs 99,620 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, driven by consistent buying from stockists, as reported by the All India Sarafa Association. The previous day's closing price for the 99.9 per cent pure gold had been Rs 99,170 per 10 grams. Similarly, gold of 99.5 per cent purity rose Rs 400 to Rs 99,000 per 10 grams. Additionally, silver witnessed a significant jump of Rs 1,000, closing at Rs 1,05,800 per kilogram. Market analysts attribute the rise in bullion prices to the dollar index falling to a 3.5-year low and declining US Treasury yields. Concerns of impending US trade tariff deadline on 9 July further contributed to a bullish outlook for gold and silver. *—PTI*

Rupee gains 31 paise, closes at 85.31 against USD

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

The Indian rupee gained 31 paise to close at Rs 85.31 provisional against the US dollar on Thursday, aided by a weaker dollar and declining US Treasury yields. The domestic currency opened at Rs 85.69 and reached an intra-day high of Rs 85.19 before stabilising. This appreciation followed the release of disappointing ADP Non-Farm Employment data from the US and a drop in global crude oil prices. Analysts noted that while the rupee's rise was noteworthy, weak domestic markets limited its growth potential. Despite the dollar index rising slightly to 96.82, expectations remain for further rupee strengthening, bolstered by a positive sentiment towards risk in global markets.. *—PTI*

Biocon secures EU nod to test bone cancer drugs

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Biocon Ltd announced that its subsidiary, Biocon Biologics, has received marketing authorisation from the European Commission for two Denosumab biosimilars, Vevzuo and Evfraxy. The approvals follow a positive opinion from the EMA's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use on 25 April, 2025. Vevzuo is approved for preventing bone complications in adults with advanced cancer involving bone, and for treating giant cell tumour of bone in adults and skeletally mature adolescents. Evfraxy is approved for osteoporosis in men and postmenopausal women, and for bone loss linked to hormone ablation in prostate cancer or long-term steroid therapy. CEO Shreehas Tambe said the approvals reflect Biocon's commitment to expanding access to critical medicines across Europe. *—PTI*

IFC to give ₹460 cr for largest battery project in Gujarat

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, committed Rs 460 crore on Thursday to IndiGrid to build India's largest standalone battery energy storage system project in Gujarat. The project is set to play a key role in supporting the state's clean energy goals by enhancing grid stability and ensuring reliable power is available during peak demand, a joint statement said. India's power sector is undergoing a structural shift as the country advances toward its target of 500 GW of clean energy capacity by 2030, it further read. Utility-scale battery storage is emerging as a critical solution to address grid stability challenges, including peak load management and dispatch reliability while enabling greater integration of solar and wind energy. *—PTI*

Foxconn sacks 300 Chinese staff from Indian Apple unit

Move may hit iPhone production set to begin by 2026

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Apple's ambitious plans to ramp up iPhone production in India have hit a significant hurdle, as Foxconn Technology Group has reportedly sent over 300 Chinese engineers and technicians back home from its factories in southern India.

According to Bloomberg, most were recalled two months ago, with Taiwanese staff now overseeing operations.

This unexpected pullback is likely to slow the training of local workers and delay the transfer of manufacturing know-how, potentially increasing production costs. While quality is expected to remain unaffected, efficiency may take a hit, sources said. Neither Foxconn nor Apple have commented officially.

Apple had been preparing to shift the assembly of all iPhones sold in the US to India by 2026, with Foxconn spearheading the effort. The contract manufacturer is expanding its Bengaluru facility and plans to add 1,000 new local staff by mid-July, taking its India headcount to 40,000.

This unexpected pullback is likely to slow the training of local workers and delay the transfer of manufacturing know-how *PHOTO: ANI*

The move comes amid rising geopolitical tensions and a reported informal directive from Beijing to limit technology transfers to India. Apple's reliance on skilled Chinese workers has long been a cornerstone of its supply chain, with CEO Tim Cook praising their expertise.

Meanwhile, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge criticised the Modi government over its China policy. On X, he questioned the government's red carpet approach to Chinese firms under the PLI scheme, despite earlier border tensions.

Kharge also raised concerns about China restricting exports of rare earth minerals and speciality fertilisers to India, both critical for key sectors like defence, EVs, and agriculture. India imports 80% of its speciality fertilisers from China, and recent curbs could impact millions of farmers already grappling with urea and DAP shortages.

These developments threaten to disrupt Apple's iPhone 17 production timelines and cast doubt over India's role as a global manufacturing alternative to China. *—Agencies*

GROWTH IN JUNE

Services sector hits 10-month high

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

PHOTO: PTI

India's services sector saw robust growth in June, touching a 10-month high on the back of a strong rise in new business orders and sustained job creation, according to the HSBC India Services PMI survey released Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted Services PMI Business Activity Index rose to 60.4 in June from 58.8 in May, signalling a sharp acceleration in growth. A reading above 50 indicates expansion, while below 50 signals contraction.

"The Services PMI reached a ten-month high, driven by strong growth in new domestic orders. Export orders also rose, though at a softer pace. Margins improved as input cost inflation remained below the increase in output charges," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

New business expanded at its fastest pace since August 2024, aided by firm domestic demand and stronger international sales, especially from Asia, the Middle East and the US. The ongoing expansion boosted recruitment, with June marking the 37th consecutive month of employment growth. Although job creation eased from May's record, it remained above the long-term average.

Cost pressures were most acute in the consumer services segment, while the sharpest increase in output prices was recorded in the finance and insurance sector.

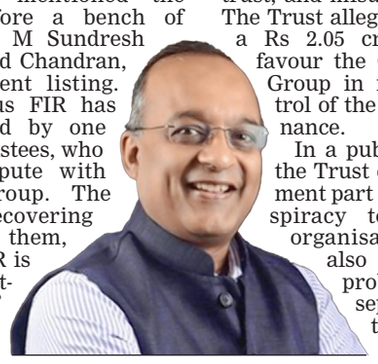
Optimism about future output persisted, though only 18 per cent of firms expected growth— the lowest since mid-2022, pulling overall confidence below the long-run average. *—PTI*

HDFC Bank CEO moves SC against Lilavati's FIR

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

HDFC Bank CEO and MD Sashidhar Jagdishan has moved the Supreme Court seeking to quash an FIR registered against him by the Lilavati Kirtilal Mehta Medical Trust, which manages Mumbai's renowned Lilavati Hospital. The matter is listed for hearing on Friday.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing Jagdishan, mentioned the matter before a bench of Justices M M Sundresh and K Vinod Chandran, urging urgent listing. "A frivolous FIR has been lodged by one group of trustees, who are in dispute with another group. The bank is recovering dues from them, and this FIR is an arm-twisting tactic," he told the bench.



Rohatgi added that three benches of the Bombay High Court had recused themselves, with the next tentative hearing date set for July 14. "Every day, the bank is suffering," he said.

The FIR, registered at Bandra police station on a magistrate's order under Section 175(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), accuses Jagdishan of cheating, criminal breach of trust, and misuse of position. The Trust alleges he accepted a Rs 2.05 crore bribe to favour the Chetan Mehta Group in retaining control of the Trust's governance.

In a public statement, the Trust called the payment part of a wider conspiracy to "loot" the organisation. It has also sought a CBI probe through a separate plea in the High Court. *—PTI*

Stock markets decline on fag-end selling

MUMBAI, 3 JULY

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty pared intra-day gains to close lower on Thursday due to last-hour selling in financial and metal shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped by 170.22 points or 0.20 per cent to settle at 83,239.47. During the day, it jumped 440.4 points or 0.52 per cent to 83,850.09.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined by 48.10 points or 0.19 per cent to 25,405.30.

Among the Sensex firms, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Adani Ports, Trent, State Bank of India, Titan and TCS were the laggards.

However, Maruti, Infosys, NTPC, Asian Paints, Eternal and Hindustan Unilever were among the biggest gainers.

"Markets traded volatile on the weekly expiry day and ended marginally lower, continuing the ongoing consolidation phase," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

Sector-wise, the trend remained mixed -- auto and pharma posted gains, while metal and realty were among the top losers, he added. The broader indices also mirrored this movement and closed on a flat note.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled higher while Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower.

European markets were trading on a mixed note. The US markets ended mostly higher on Wednesday. *—PTI*

Gujarat becomes 3rd state to cross 1 crore market investors

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

As India witnesses a surge in the number of people joining stock markets, Gujarat has become the third state to cross the 1-crore mark in registered investors, according to the latest data released by the National Stock Exchange. Gujarat, along with UP and Maharashtra now account for 36 per cent of the total investor base in the country, underlining their significant role in shaping India's growing equity participation.

As of May 2025, the total number of registered investors in India has reached close to 11.5 crore and over 11 lakh new investors joined the market. The overall growth pattern, however, shows a change in momentum. After reaching the 9-crore investor mark in February 2024, India added the next crore every five to six months, reaching 10 crore by August 2024 and 11 crore by January 2025. *—ANI*

India initiates anti-dumping probe into Indonesian paper

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

PHOTO: GEMINI AI

India's Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), under the Commerce Ministry, has initiated an anti-dumping investigation into imports of Virgin Multi-layer Paperboard from Indonesia. The move comes after the Indian Paper Manufacturer Association lodged a complaint on behalf of the domestic industry, alleging that low-priced imports are harming local manufacturers.

The paperboard in question is widely used in packaging for pharmaceuticals, FMCG goods, food and beverages, electronics, luxury cosmetics, alcohol, and publishing. According to DGTR's official notification, the association submitted prima facie evidence indicating injury to the domestic industry due to these dumped imports.

"The authority hereby initiates an anti-dumping investigation to determine the existence, degree, and effect of the dumping," the notification stated.

Should the investigation confirm that these imports have caused material injury, DGTR may recommend anti-dumping duties to counteract the impact. The final decision on imposing such duties lies with the Ministry of Finance.

Anti-dumping measures, permitted under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, aim to ensure fair trade and protect domestic producers from unfairly priced foreign goods. *—PTI*

FROM 2026

RBI bans pre-payment fees by banks on loans

MUMBAI, 3 JULY

In a significant relief for borrowers, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that banks and other regulated lenders will no longer be permitted to impose pre-payment charges on floating rate loans taken by individuals for non-business purposes.

The RBI observed that certain lenders were including restrictive clauses in loan agreements to discourage borrowers from switching to other institutions offering more competitive rates or better service.

According to the new guidelines, effective from 1 January 2026, this rule applies to all loans and advances sanctioned or renewed on or after this date, regardless of whether a co-borrower is involved. The directive applies to all commercial banks (excluding payment banks), co-operative banks, NBFCs, and All India Financial Institutions.

There will be no pre-payment charges even if the loan is repaid in part or full, or irrespective of the source of repayment. This also includes loans with dual or special interest rates—if the loan is on a floating rate at the time of pre-payment, no charge will apply.

The RBI stressed that any charges on loans outside this scope must be clearly disclosed in the sanction letter, loan agreement, and Key Facts Statement. No hidden or retrospective charges are allowed.

This move is aimed at improving transparency and borrower rights. *—ANI*

RBI rate cuts lead to cooling in credit: Report

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

A report by CareEdge has noted that credit offtake and deposit growth have both cooled following a 100 basis point repo rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) since February. Despite lower deposit rates, deposit growth continues to outpace credit offtake in the current fortnight.

As of June 13, 2025, deposits declined by 0.44 per cent to Rs 230.7 lakh crore, compared to 12.1 per cent growth last year. The slowdown is attributed to banks relying more on certificates of deposit amid increased competition in the bulk deposit segment.

Credit offtake stood at Rs 183.1 lakh crore, growing 9.6 per cent year-on-year, down from 15.5 per cent a year ago.

The Weighted Average Call Rate (WACR) dropped to 5.27 per cent from 6.68 per cent a year earlier, following three repo rate cuts. *—PTI*

Infosys pledges Rs 48 cr to healthcare in Karnataka

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

PHOTO: X

The Infosys Foundation, the charitable arm of IT giant Infosys, has committed over Rs 48 crore to enhance healthcare infrastructure and services for maternal and child health in rural Karnataka.

The Foundation has partnered with the UN-recognised Prashanthi Balamandira Trust to support the Sri Sathya Sai Sarla Memorial Hospital, a multi-speciality teaching facility affiliated with the Sri Madhusudan Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (SMSIMSR).

The grant will be utilised to procure advanced medical equipment for obstetrics, gynaecology, and intensive care units, including the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), and general ICU. Additional investment will also strengthen diagnostic radiology and surgical theatres. A portion of the funds will be allocated towards operational costs.

According to Infosys Foundation, the initiative is expected to provide free, high-quality healthcare to more than 8,000 underprivileged women, infants, and children annually.

As a teaching hospital, SMSIMSR will also benefit by using the new equipment for training undergraduate and postgraduate doctors. *—PTI*

Meesho files draft paper with Sebi for ₹4,250cr IPO

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

SoftBank-backed e-commerce firm Meesho has filed draft papers with India's market regulator SEBI through the confidential pre-filing route, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The move follows an Extraordinary General Meeting held on 25 June, where a resolution was passed to proceed with an initial public offering (IPO) aimed at raising at least Rs 4,250 crore.

While the exact size of the IPO, including any secondary share sales, remains unclear, Meesho's choice of the confidential route allows it to delay public disclosure of detailed IPO information. This method offers companies greater flexibility and reduces pressure to list quickly. *—PTI*

EYES FY26 BREAK-EVEN

Banga family sells 2.1% stake in Nykaa for ₹1,213 crore

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Harindarpal Singh Banga and his wife Indra Banga on Thursday sold a 2.1 per cent stake in FSN E-Commerce Ventures, the parent company of beauty and fashion retailer Nykaa, for Rs 1,213.5 crore via bulk deals on the BSE and NSE.

The Bangas offloaded approximately 6 crore shares at Rs 202.25 per share — a 4.4 per cent discount to Nykaa's previous NSE close of Rs 211.59. Following the sale, Nykaa's stock declined by 4 per cent to Rs 203.50 on the BSE and 3.82 per cent on the NSE. Goldman Sachs (India) Securities and J.P. Morgan India acted as deal brokers.

Harindarpal Singh, a Hong Kong-based commodities billionaire and Chairman of Caravel Group, was an early investor in Nykaa, which went public in 2021. His holding in the company now stands reduced to 2.87 per cent, down from 4.97 per cent. In August 2024, he had divested a 1.43 per cent stake for Rs 851.5 crore.

The sale comes as Nykaa targets FY26 break-even for its cash-burning fashion vertical, which posted an FY25 EBITDA margin of (-)8.3 per cent on Rs 3,800 crore GMV. The firm is also venturing into quick-commerce with "Nykaa Now", offering 30 to 120-minute deliveries across seven major cities.

For FY25, Nykaa reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 66.08 crore, more than double the previous year, with revenue rising 24.4 per cent to Rs 7,949.82 crore.

The customer base also grew 28 per cent YoY to over 42 million.

The bulk deal was entirely secondary in nature and executed across one or more tranches. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Suryavanshi helps India beat England by 4 wkts

NORTHAMPTON, 3 JULY

Teenage sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi continued his rich vein of form by smashing a record nine sixes as India defeated England by four wickets in the rain-truncated third U19 Youth ODI to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series here. The 14-year-old Suryavanshi, who had come close to striking half-centuries in the previous two games before getting dismissed in his 40s, finally made his innings count as he clobbered the home team bowling on his way to 86 off just 31 deliveries as India chased England's 268/6 in 34.3 overs on Wednesday. Suryavanshi's knock was studded with six boundaries and nine maximums. Nine sixes by Suryavanshi is the highest number of maximums hit by an Indian batter in a U-19 ODI, eclipsing the previous record of eight sixes by Mandeep Singh.—*PTI*

Srinagar to host first-ever Khelo India Water Sports

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Srinagar will host the inaugural Khelo India Water Sports Festival at its iconic Dal Lake, where more than 400 athletes from all over the country will compete in disciplines like kayaking and canoeing, water skiing, and rowing from 21 to 23 August. Sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced this in an interaction with the media here and said it would add to the government's push for expansion of the Khelo India movement that recently added the first-ever Beach Games in Diu to its roster.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Srikanth enters quarterfinals after beating Wang

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

AIndia's Kidambi Srikanth advanced to the quarterfinals of the Canada Open 2025 after beating Chinese Taipei's Wang Po-Wei in straight games on Thursday at the Markham Pan Am Centre. Srikanth beat his opponent 21-19, 21-14 in 40 minutes and will face another Chinese Taipei shuttler — either Chou Tien Chen or Huang Ping-Hsien, both of whom face off in another Round of 16 match. Later in the day, Indians Shriyanshi Valishetty and Sankar Muthusamy will be in action in their respective matches in singles.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

J'khand Guv visits ailing ex-hockey player at hospital

RANCHI, 3 JULY

Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar on Thursday visited former international hockey player Bimal Lakra, who is undergoing treatment at a Ranchi hospital, an official said. The governor visited the hospital and talked to the attending doctors regarding the progress of Lakra's treatment and wished him a speedy recovery.Forty-five-year-old Lakra was found unconscious at a farm near his paternal house in Simdega district on June 30. He was referred to Simdega Sadar Hospital, where a CT scan was done, in which a blood clot was spotted in the head.—*PTI*

Pak gets govt nod to be in India for hockey's Asia Cup

NEW DELHI, 3 JULY

Pakistan's hockey teams will not be stopped from competing in next month's Asia Cup and the subsequent junior World Cup in India, as any move to block the arch-foes from multi-lateral competitions in the country would be a violation of the Olympic Charter, a sports ministry source said on Thursday.

While the Asia Cup is scheduled to be held in Rajgir, Bihar, from August 27 to September 7, the junior World Cup will be organised in Chennai and Madurai from 28 November to 10 December."We are not against any team competing in India in a multi-national competition. If we try to stop Pakistan, it would be seen as a violation of the Olympic Charter.

Likewise, we will also show up for any multi-national event that features Pakistan. But bilateral is different and there will be no relaxation on that front," the source said. The ministry's decision also clears the decks for Pakistani participation in the junior World Cup of shooting, scheduled here in September, and the World Para-Athletics Championships, also in the national capital in September-October.

The Charter is akin to the constitution of the Olympic movement and stresses on sport as a tool for promoting international peace and cooperation.

As a result, any attempt to block a rival country from a multi-national event adversely impacts the host country's prospects of getting future hosting rights.When asked whether this means India will be allowed to play against Pakistan in the Asia Cup of cricket in September, the source said, "The BCCI is yet to reach out to the ministry on this. —*PTI*

Gill becomes 6th Indian with double-century in England

Gill's strategy & body language show he's world-class: Trott

BIRMINGHAM, 3 JULY

Shubman Gill on Thursday became only the sixth Indian captain to score a double hundred during the second Test between India and England in Birmingham.

MAK Pataudi, Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar, MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli are the only others to manage this feat.

This is Gill's maiden double-century in Tests. Earlier, he scored his maiden 150-plus score during the knock.

Gill added a massive 203-run stand for the sixth wicket alongside Ravindra Jadeja.

India has surpassed 470 runs.

India captain Shubman Gill's thought-out strategy and body language on the opening day of the second Test against England are traits of a world-class player with a bright future, says former cricketer Jonathan Trott.

Gill stood tall with a second consecutive ton in the five-Test series, reaching 114 not out (216 balls, 12 fours) at stumps to take India to a sturdy 310/5 on the opening day of the second Test in Birmingham.

The former England batter and incumbent Afghanistan coach heaped praise on the Indian skipper, who held the innings together on a tricky opening day wherein England threatened to cause more damage than they did.

India skipper Shubman Gill rewrote history on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

ANDERSON TENDULKAR TROPHY

"What also stood out was his body language and the way he scored his runs. Gill's strategy & body language show he's world-class.

His control against the English bowlers sent a message to the dressing room that he was taking charge (and) leading from the front," Trott said in 'JioHotstar'.

Trott pointed out the difference in Gill's approach while facing England pacers Brydon Carse and Chris Woakes as one of the highlights of his innings.

"Carse has a bit more pace than Chris Woakes, but what's impressive is Gill's understanding of how to counter both," he said.

"He knows Woakes will try to attack the stumps, and without express pace, Gill formulated a plan to handle that, not something he came up with on the day, but a strategy thought out well in advance.

This is what separates good players from average ones and world-class players from the rest."

While Gill crossed the triple-figure mark, opener Yashasvi Jaiswal missed his second hundred when he fell for 87, but his performances in England so far have impressed the former batter. —*PTI*

INDIAN CAPTAINS TO SCORE A DOUBLE HUNDRED

Players	200/200	HS	Opponent	Venue
M.A.K Pataudi	1	203*	England	Delhi
Sunil Gavaskar	1	205	West Indies	Mumbai
Sachin Tendulkar	1	217	NZ	Ahmedabad
MS Dhoni	1	224	Australia	Chennai
Virat Kohli	7	254*	South Africa	Pune
Shubman Gill*	1	200*	England	Birmingham

WOMEN'S T20I

India eye maiden series victory over England

LONDON, 3 JULY

Riding a wave of momentum, India will look to secure their maiden women's T20I series triumph over England when they lock horns with the hosts in the third game of a five-match series here on Friday.

Harmanpreet Kaur and Co. have been in red-hot form, having handed England a record-shattering 97-run defeat in the series opener before sealing a 24-run win in Bristol, England women's first-ever T20I loss at the venue, to take a commanding 2-0 lead.

In 2006, India had beaten England in a lone match played in Derby. Since then, the Women in Blue have fallen short in every women's T20I series against England, both at home and away.

This dominant performance comes as a timely boost for India as they continue to adapt to English conditions, a crucial exercise in the build-up to next year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup to be held in England.

So far, the Indian unit has functioned like a well-oiled machine. Vice-captain Smriti Mandhana, who scored a century, and Harleen Deol were instrumental with the bat in the opener.

In the second match, Amanjot Kaur and Jemimah Rodrigues rescued the visitors from a precarious position with vital half-centuries, propelling India to a formidable total.

However, the spotlight now turns to big-hitting opener Shafali Verma, who will be eager to make a statement. Back in the squad, Shafali has struggled to get going with scores of 20 and 3 in the series. The match starts at 11:05 pm IST. —*PTI*

Grand Chess Tour: Gukesh in joint lead with Carlsen

ZAGREB, 3 JULY

World champion D Gukesh came up with two straight victories to tie for the top spot alongside world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen of Norway, Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland, and American Wesley So at the end of the first three rounds of the Super United Rapid and Blitz Chess tournament, a part of the Grand Chess Tour.

Starting the day with a loss against Duda, Gukesh overpowered a reckless Alireza Firouzja of France before defeating compatriot R Praggnanandhaa to reach four points out of a possible six. Carlsen beat Wesley So and drew his remaining two games against local star Ivan Saric and Duda to match Gukesh on points, while Wesley was the only other player involved in all decisive games, apart from Gukesh, as he put it across his US compatriot Fabiano Caruana and Anish Giri of the Netherlands. —*PTI*

"Gukesh is one of the weaker players at the Grand Chess Tour"

-Magnus Carlsen, World champion, Norway

Djokovic reaches 99 not out at Wimbledon

LONDON, 3 JULY

Novak Djokovic helped himself to a 99 in the Wimbledon sunshine as Dan Evans melted away.

Djokovic, the seven-time champion, is now just one short of a century of match wins in SW19 after a 6-3 6-2 6-0 win of ominous efficiency.

Evans was tasked with being this year's plucky Brit to face the Serbian on Centre Court, reprising a role previously played by Jacob Fearnley, Jack Draper, Kyle Edmund, and James Ward. It was by no means a flaky performance from the 35-year-old, but he still went the same way as all the others.

"I knew it was going to be a special atmosphere on the court today, a Brit in Britain is never easy to face," said Djokovic.

"He's a good quality player who possesses a lot of talent. Sometimes you have these kinds of days where everything goes your way."

Evans had won their only previous career meeting, in Monte Carlo four years ago.

This time, he was playing with house money, having arrived at Wimbledon as a wild card with a ranking now down at 154. But Djokovic quickly upped the ante, with Evans having to save nine break points in the first set before succumbing to the 10th to trail 5-3.

It was relentless from the 38-year-old, who held to love with an ace to clinch a first set in which he dropped just three points on his serve. —*PTI*

Novak Djokovic

Raul sends Mexico to Gold Cup final

SANTA CLARA, 3 JULY

Raúl Jiménez scored in the 50th minute off an assist from 16-year-old Gilberto Mora and Mexico advanced to its 12th CONCACAF Gold Cup final with a 1-0 victory over Honduras on Wednesday night.

El Tri advanced to play the United States in the final Sunday night in Houston for the eighth meeting in the title game between the two countries, with Mexico owning a 5-2 edge. Mexico has won nine Gold Cups, the U.S. seven, and Canada one.

Mexico broke through early in the second half on a play started by Alexis Vega with a pass to Mora near the top of the box. Mora slid a pass to Jiménez, who beat Edrick Menjívar with a right-footed shot for his 42nd career international goal.

No. 17-ranked Mexico appeared to add to that lead a few minutes later when Edson Álvarez tapped in a goal off a set piece, but that was negated when video review ruled he was offside.

But El Tri managed to hold onto that lead as 75th-ranked Honduras was unable to generate an equalizer.

Honduras reached this stage for the first time since 2013 despite losing the opener of the tournament 6-0 to Canada. The Hondurans haven't made the final since the inaugural tournament in 1991, when they lost in penalty kicks to the US —*PTI*

Balaji enters second round

LONDON, 3 JULY

India's N Sriram Balaji joined compatriots Yuki Bhambri and Rithvik Bollipalli in the second round of the men's doubles event at Wimbledon here on Thursday.

Balaji, world No. 74, and his Mexican partner Miguel Reyes-Varela defeated the American duo of Learner Tien and Aleksandar Kovacevic 6-4, 6-4 in an opening round match.

The contest lasted 71 minutes, and the Indo-Mexican pair broke their opponents once each in both sets to wrap up the match without much fuss. —*PTI*

GONE TOO SOON

Liverpool player Diogo and his brother killed in Spain car crash

MADRID, 3 JULY

Liverpool player Diogo Jota and his brother were killed in a car accident in Spain when the Lamborghini they were in veered off a road and burst into flames, police said Thursday.

The Spanish Civil Guard confirmed to The Associated Press that the 28-year-old Jota and his 25-year-old brother, André Silva, were found dead near the northwestern city of Zamora. Police were investigating the causes of the accident that happened past midnight local time. They said there were no other vehicles involved. The bodies were undergoing forensic analysis.

Firefighters were called in as the fire spread into the nearby vegetation, authorities said.

It wasn't clear who was driving the car. Police were looking into the hypothesis that the accident happened because of a blown tire while they tried to overtake another vehicle.

The accident occurred while they were driving eastward along an isolated stretch of highway about an hour west of Zamora.

Video images of the aftermath published by Spanish media showed braking tire marks veering off the road toward torn-apart guardrails. The burnt-up car was seen several meters ahead, with some of the local vegetation around it destroyed by the fire.

Jota and Silva, both Portuguese players, were the only ones in the car, police said. Jota's death comes weeks after he married Rute Cardoso and in a social media post wrote, "Yes to forever." They had three children, the youngest born last year.

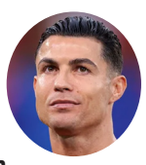
Jota also played for Portugal's national team and helped it win the Nations League last month. —*PTI*

Liverpool player Diogo Jota and his brother PHOTO: X/@LFC

"Aged 28, Diogo has enjoyed a fantastic career to date and has many great years ahead of him, while his brother Andre was thriving at FC Penafiel - they will both be so sorely missed by all those who knew them and by the worldwide football community."

-FIFA President Gianni Infantino

"Doesn't make any sense. Just now we were together in the National Team, just now you were married. To your family, to your wife and children, I send my condolences and wish them all the strength in the world."



-Cristiano, Portugal and Al Nassr captain

"Liverpool FC will be making no further comment at this time and requests that the privacy of Diogo and Andre's family, friends, teammates, and club staff be respected as they try to come to terms with an unimaginable loss"

-The Liverpool soccer club